

GUIDE

TO

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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PRESIDENT MAHAN'S REPLY TO DR. WOODS.

TO REV. LEONARD WOODS, D. D., PROF. THEOLOGY, THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
ANDOVER, MASS.

RESPECTED INSTRUCTOR,—The kind and Christian spirit which characterizes your recent review of my work on Christian Perfection, is truly refreshing, and encourages me to address you in reply. You have unfortunately misapprehended my arguments, in almost every instance. For this and other reasons, your reply has failed, in my case at least, to convince of error. It has operated rather to confirm me in my previous opinions. You will allow me, therefore, with all frankness, to give you the reasons why your articles have left this impression upon my mind. For the sake of perspicuity and precision, permit me, at the outset, to state the points on which we *agree*, and those on which we *differ*, as set forth and admitted in your review. To these special attention needs to be directed. On the following points, then, we fully harmonize:

1. In the fact, that perfect holiness is definitely required of us in the Bible.
2. In the fact, that we have natural ability to render perfect obedience to every command of God. On the fact, that we harmonize here, you lay much stress.
3. We harmonize in the doctrine, that provisions fully adequate, are made and definitely revealed in the gospel, to render the holiness of Christians thus perfect in this life. Speaking on this point, you say, "We do believe it, and we always have believed it." "The gospel is no gospel without it."
4. We are fully agreed, that this perfect holiness is definitely promised in the gospel, to Christians in this life, on condition, that "God be inquired of," by faith, "to do it for them." "We agree," you say, "what the promises are, and what a complete accomplishment implies."
5. We agree, that to render these provisions and promises effectual to the entire sanctification of Christians in this life, is one of the specific objects for

which the Holy Spirit was given, the church organized, and the ministry and ordinances appointed, as set forth, Eph. iii. 14 — 21, and iv. 11 — 16. On this point you have not spoken particularly. As you profess, however, an entire agreement in respect to the *provisions* of grace, and as these are set forth in the Bible as a part of such provisions, we may take it for granted that you concur with us here also.

6. We agree, that to make the attainment of this state the object of earnest endeavor and fervent prayer, is an essential element of Christian character. "It is in my view," you say, "essential to the character of true holiness, that they [Christians] should sincerely pray, that the blood of Christ may cleanse them from all sin, and that the God of peace would sanctify them wholly."

7. We harmonize in the belief, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life. "Both parties hold," you say, "that complete holiness is attainable."

On these and kindred topics, you not only avow an agreement with us, but charge me with "obvious fault," in representing the belief of such precious truths as peculiar to those who hold the doctrine of Christian Perfection. Of the justness of this charge I shall speak in its proper place. My object now is, to fix attention upon those great truths bearing upon our present inquiries — truths which are now admitted alike by the advocates and opposers of the doctrine of Christian Perfection, as among the essential elements of the gospel. Such are the points on which we harmonize. The questions about which we differ, are the two following:

1. *Whether we are authorized, in view of the above named precious and essential truths of the gospel, to set our hearts upon rendering in this life perfect obedience to God, with the rational expectation of doing it?* "This question," you say, "we [yourself and those who agree with you] answer in the negative." The same question those with whom I agree answer in the affirmative.

2. We differ in regard to the question, whether it is a revealed fact, that any have rendered or will render this obedience in this life.

Of these two questions, we maintain that the first is the great practical question with us as Christians. Hence almost all our arguments are avowedly adduced to establish this one point. Our opponents, on the other hand, fasten upon the second as *the main question*, and perseveringly refuse to discuss the other. Arguments adduced by us to establish the first point, they evade, by replying to them as if they were adduced to establish the second. Permit me to inquire, whether you yourself have not fallen into this error, and for this reason, failed entirely to meet almost every argument to which you professedly reply? "How can Mr. Mahan," you ask, "refuse to recognize this," that is, the second point, "as the main point at issue, *if we choose to make it so*, and agree with him as to other leading points?" Now by your own admission, as shown above, you differ from us in respect to what we have always argued as the *main question*. Your first article is almost wholly occupied in replying to arguments avowedly adduced by us for the exclusive purpose of settling this one question. These arguments you meet, not by showing that they do not settle the point to establish which they were adduced —

a point about which you acknowledge that we differ — but by showing, what no one will deny, that they do not settle another and different question. I shall have occasion to recur to this again.

THE MAIN QUESTION.

Permit me here to inquire, which of these questions ought to be regarded by us as the *great practical question*? In illustration, we will suppose, that in your introductory lecture, you present your pupils with an outline of your course of study. At the close, a student asks the question, "May we set our hearts upon acquiring, under your instruction, a knowledge of this great system of truth, with the rational expectation of doing it?" Another student replies, "that the brother has entirely mistaken the real practical question.—The question of practical moment to the class, is not whether *we* may properly set our hearts upon mastering this system, with the rational hope of success; but whether any persons have, as a matter of fact, succeeded, or will succeed in mastering it?" Which of these individuals would you say had put the great question of practical moment to that class? Would you not say that the first had done this, for the obvious reason, that some few extraordinary minds might master the system, while to ordinary students the task would be hopeless? For similar reasons, might it not be true that some ancient saints, such as Paul, have rendered perfect obedience to God, while by Christians in the ordinary circumstances of life, these attainments cannot be rationally expected? On the same principle, common laborers might feel that they have no right to expect to amass a fortune of millions, although Mr. Astor and others have done so. Indeed, Christians in general think it vain to hope that they can become as holy as Paul; so that if it was admitted that he was quite perfect, this would not, in their view, justify them in expecting or aiming to become so. It would not settle at all, in their view, the momentous question which is now pressing upon them, namely, What attainments may *we* rationally hope to make?

A Connecticut pastor told me, that when he was about to unite with the church, he went to his spiritual teacher with the question, what the covenant meant? and whether it did not pledge him, under oath, to live without sin? He was told that it did. He then asked, if he was expected to keep that covenant? In other words, whether he might set his heart upon perfect obedience to God, with the rational expectation of rendering it? To this question the pastor, we will suppose, replies, "God requires you to live without sin. This you have natural ability to do. In fact, you may do it. In addition to this, grace perfectly adequate to render such obedience is proffered to you in the provisions and promises of the gospel." The convert now asks, whether he is authorized, in view of these precious truths, to aim to fulfil those vows, with the rational hope of success? Would not you, my brother, regard this as the great practical question which a view of such truths and circumstances suggests — a question to which every spiritual guide ought to be prepared to give a specific answer? Is not this, and not the inquiry, what attainments good men have made or will make, the great question with us as Christians?

Suppose, however, that this pastor should reply, that the convert had mistaken the question; that the real question is not, what we may aim at, with rational hope, in view of the promises and provisions of the gospel; but whether "there is evidence that good men have attained or will attain to perfection in the present life?" What ought to be thought of such a reply?

The Church is now arising to ask of her spiritual guides, what degree of holiness she may rationally hope to attain, in view of the commands of God, her natural powers, and the acknowledged provisions and promises of the gospel? Till this question receives a specific answer, she will not and ought not to rest. May I not, then, safely affirm, that the question which we have put as the *main question*, ought to be so regarded by the Church? For the truth of this affirmation, may I not safely appeal to your own consciousness? When alone with God — when pressed with the commands, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" — when conscious of your ability to render the obedience required — and when as fully sensible of the fact that the Spirit of God is now proffering you grace, through the provisions and promises of the gospel, to render that obedience, may I not safely ask, what question, under such circumstances, presents itself to your mind as the great question of practical moment? — the question, whether *I* may properly hope to make the attainments thus required of and proffered to me? — or, have I "evidence that good men have attained or will attain to perfection in the present life?"

One remark more I deem it important to make here. As these questions are palpably distinct, the one from the other, so they must be settled by trains of argumentation equally distinct. An argument which should demonstrate the first, for example, may have no bearing at all upon the second. It would be no reply, therefore, to an argument avowedly adduced to settle the first question, to show that it does not settle the second; any more than it would be a reply to an argument adduced to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, to show that it does not prove the divinity of Christ.

The way is now prepared to consider your reply to the arguments adduced by us, to sustain the position, that the Scriptures authorize us to *set our hearts upon rendering, in this life, the perfect obedience which God requires of us, and which we have covenanted with God and his Church to render, with the expectation of success.* Permit me, before coming directly to this subject, to call your attention to two or three important preliminary observations.

1. I would say, that I perfectly agree with you in the truth and importance of one principle laid down at the commencement of your articles, with this additional remark, in which you will doubtless concur with me, that not only those who undertake "to sustain and propagate a novel system," but all others are bound by this rule, viz.: "*When a man undertakes to sustain and propagate a novel system — a system different from what has commonly been entertained by the best of men — it is inadmissible for him to set forth, as a part of his system, any opinions which are held by those from whom he professes to differ.* He may show, if he can, that the principles which are common to him and to others,

when rightly carried out, involve his peculiarities, and that those who do not embrace his system are inconsistent with themselves, in holding to those common principles. He is at liberty to show that they stop short of the mark, and must suffer loss. But can he, with propriety, mention those commonly received principles as *peculiar* to *him*, in distinction from others? Can he take any advantage from them, to prove the excellence of *his* system, above the common system? Can he in any way properly make the impression that they belong to *him*, more than to evangelical ministers generally?"

2. I would notice some important principles which you taught me, when under your instruction, as universally binding, especially in conducting religious controversies. The principles are these:

(1.) Give the positions, and especially the main position of an opponent, just as he has stated them.

(2.) Present the arguments which he has adduced to sustain any position of his, which you controvert, just as he presented them, and in all their force.

(3.) Show that his arguments do not sustain that particular position.

Any transgression of these principles, you taught me to regard as evasion, and no reply.

3. You will now permit me, in view of the above principles, to call in question the propriety of an assumption of yourself, and others who agree with you on this subject, in replying to us. It is, that in your reply to us, you have a right to assume any question at issue between us you please, as the *main question*, and then to reply to all our arguments, for whatever purpose adduced, as if they were designed to settle that one question. It is readily granted, that yourself or any other person has a right to discuss any question connected with the doctrine of Christian Perfection you please, and to assume any question connected with that doctrine, as the *main question*, provided you do not present your articles as a reply to what we have said or written upon the subject, and do not in that reply pretend that we maintain the position which you controvert. If you profess to reply to us, permit me to inquire whether, in that case, you have that liberty? Are you not, then, bound by the principles which you enjoin upon your pupils as of universal obligation, to meet the question as *we* have stated it, and in replying to our arguments, to show, what indeed in the very act of replying you profess to do, that they do not sustain our position?

I will now frankly state to you what we regard as the palpable defects in your articles, whenever you profess to reply to our arguments.

1. In almost all such replies, you have, as it seems to us, transgressed the principle which I have quoted from your article; that is, you have represented as peculiar to your system, things which are equally essential to ours.

2. In all your replies to our arguments, you have assumed, that there is but one question at issue between us, when you yourself acknowledge that there are two, and when each of these questions must be settled by trains of argumentation perfectly distinct the one from the other.

3. All arguments designed and avowedly adduced by us to meet the first, and

what we have presented as the *main question*, you have replied to as if they were adduced by us to settle another and entirely different question. Thus you seem to us always to evade, instead of meeting the question which you profess to meet. The truth of these assertions, the sequel, I doubt not, will show.

PROVISIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

I will now consider your reply to some of the arguments adduced by us to establish what we regard as the main question. To the greater number you have not replied at all.

I begin with the arguments drawn from the provisions of the gospel. In the fact that provisions are made and revealed in the gospel for this one avowed and specific object, the complete sanctification of believers in this life; and that these provisions are perfectly full, and adequate to this end, we are, as you yourself affirm, perfectly agreed. You also affirm, that "devout Christians and orthodox divines have, in all ages, maintained this same precious doctrine." Now from this "same precious doctrine," we draw the inference, that believers are authorized to set their hearts and fix their prayers upon the blessing provided for them, with the joyful expectation of attaining it. Why, we ask, are they not only *made*, but *revealed* to us, if not to induce us to avail ourselves of *all* the good which they proffer? Why are they presented to us as "good tidings of great joy," if they do not, and are not designed to authorize in us the *expectation* of availing ourselves of that good? What, we ask, would be thought of the declaration of the angels to the shepherds, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord?" What would be thought, I say, of such declarations, if the angel had immediately added, No one is authorized from these "good tidings," to set his heart upon being saved, with the expectation of attaining salvation? For the same reason, we affirm, that it is highly absurd to maintain, that provisions, full, free, and abundantly adequate, are made and revealed in the gospel, for this avowed and specific object, the entire sanctification of believers in this life, and then to add, that no one is authorized, from the existence and express revelation of these provisions, to indulge the expectation of attaining that state. Can that hope, we ask, be delusive and presumptuous, which rests, as all acknowledge, upon the revealed provisions of divine grace? Such is our argument, drawn from the acknowledged provisions of grace, in favor of the proposition, that we are authorized by the revelation of such provisions, to aim at perfect obedience, with the rational hope of rendering it.

Here let me add, we have never used this argument for any other purpose. We have never, as you assume, employed it to prove that any actually have attained or will attain to this state; any more than we argue from the revealed provisions of grace for the *pardon of sin*, that some actually are or will be pardoned. On the ground of the revealed provisions of divine grace for the pardon of sin, all Christians affirm to the sinner, that he is authorized to look to Christ for pardon, with the joyful expectation of receiving that blessing.

Now we maintain, that the same principle must hold true in respect to the

revealed provisions of grace, for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life. The simple revelation of provisions for the "justification of the ungodly," brings that blessing, as all admit, within the circle of rational expectation. On the same ground we say, that the revelation of provisions for complete sanctification, brings this blessing also within the same circle. Such, I repeat, is our argument. Let us see how you have met this argument.

1. You have presented that as the main question at issue between us, about which there is not and never was any difference of opinion. "Our question then, is," (that is, the question at issue between us on this subject,) you say, "Do the provisions of the gospel for the complete sanctification of God's people, *prove* that they will in fact be completely sanctified?" This question you answer in the negative. So do I. So do all the advocates of the doctrine of Christian Perfection. So we always have answered it. We give this answer with the perfect assurance that it has no bearing at all upon the doctrine of Christian Perfection; any more than the admission that revealed provisions of grace for the pardon of sin do not prove that any are pardoned, has upon the question, whether we are authorized, in view of these provisions, to look to Christ for pardon with the expectation of receiving it.

2. You have set forth, as peculiar to your system, a principle which enters as an element equally essential, into the opposite system, and on the authority of this element, common to the two, you profess to overthrow the latter system. In your reply to our argument on this point, you assume that our system affirms, and yours denies the fact, that revealed provisions of grace for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, proves that some are thus sanctified, and that if this is not admitted, our system is false; or at least, all evidence of its truth drawn from these provisions, is annihilated. Now is this assumption correct? May it not be true, that provisions for the entire sanctification of Christians do not *prove* that any are sanctified, and it remain equally true, that these provisions authorize in Christians the expectation of attaining that state, and that many will in fact attain it? Do not the provisions of grace for the pardon of sin present a case perfectly parallel? Is it not true, that these provisions do not prove that any are pardoned? At the same time, is it not equally true, that these provisions authorize sinners to look to Christ for pardon, with the expectation and assurance of receiving it? Is it not true also, that many actually enjoy this blessing? Why, then, may not the same facts hold equally true in respect to the provisions of grace for the entire sanctification of Christians?

3. You have, as it seems to us, entirely evaded the argument drawn from the acknowledged revealed provisions of the gospel for the complete sanctification of Christians, in favor of the position that Christians are authorized, in view of these provisions, to *expect* to attain to this state, by replying to that argument, as if it had been adduced by us to prove another and different position; namely, that "Christians will be completely sanctified." From the acknowledged fact, that provisions are revealed in the gospel for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, we argue, that we are authorized to look to Christ to be

thus sanctified, with the expectation of being thus sanctified by his grace and Spirit. You profess to reply to this argument. But how do you do it? Not by showing that these provisions do not authorize this expectation; but by showing, what must be equally true, whether they authorize such expectation or not, that they do not *prove* that any will in fact be completely sanctified. Now is not this an evasion of the argument to which you profess to reply? Is it not a manifest transgression of the principles which you taught me, as of universal and sacred obligation in replying to the arguments of those with whom we differ?

I will pass over what you have said on the *attainableness* of entire sanctification in this life, as I design to take it up in another place, and will proceed to consider your reply to the argument drawn from the

DIVINE PROMISES.

The argument from the divine promises, in favor of the doctrine, that *the Bible authorizes Christians to aim at and pray for a state of entire sanctification, with the expectation of attaining it*, is this: In 2 Pet. i. 4, we are informed, that it is by the promises that we are to be rendered "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." In other words, whatever degree of holiness we may hope to attain in this life, is to be attained by embracing the promises, by faith, or by looking to Christ, by faith, to have these promises fulfilled in us. From this fact we argue, that when we have ascertained the degree of holiness embraced and proffered to us in the promises, we have ascertained the degree of holiness which we are authorized to look to Christ for, with the expectation and assurance of receiving it from him. From the fact, that *entire sanctification in this life* is the degree of holiness manifestly embraced and proffered in the promises, it is argued, that we are authorized to look to Christ to be thus sanctified by his grace and Spirit, with the expectation and assurance that he will thus sanctify us. Now in respect to the extent of the promises, and in respect to the fact that we are to be sanctified, if at all, by embracing the promises by faith, you profess a full and entire agreement with us. After citing a long paragraph from my work on the subject, a paragraph in which both the above facts are clearly and definitely stated, you add, "Now all this, which I have quoted from Mr. Mahan, is just and scriptural, exhibiting the true spirit of the gospel." But how do you reply to the argument drawn from these acknowledged facts, namely, that we are authorized, by the promises, to look to Christ to be "sanctified wholly," and "preserved blameless" to His coming and kingdom, with the expectation and assurance that He is "faithful who has promised, and will also do it?" This argument you seem to me to evade in two ways:

1. By replying to it as if it had been adduced by us to prove that Christians will be completely sanctified in this life. "I understand your position to be," you say, "that the divine promises and declarations" [declarations or prophecies respecting the future attainments of the Church,] "clearly imply, *that believers will be sanctified completely during the progress of the present life.*" Now I have never assumed any such position as this, nor any thing like it, except-

ing when I have argued from the *prophecies* relating to the Millenium, that Christians will then be "sanctified wholly." This last argument, however, has nothing to do with that drawn from the promises pertaining to all Christians, and by embracing which they are to be rendered "partakers of the divine nature." It is to this last argument that you profess to reply. Now when we argue from the acknowledged fact, that complete sanctification is the blessing embraced and proffered in the promises, that we are, therefore, authorized to look to Christ to be "sanctified wholly," with the expectation and assurance of being thus sanctified by his grace and Spirit, you assume that we are endeavoring to prove by that argument, that Christians will in fact be entirely sanctified, and reply to the argument as if it was our exclusive object to sustain that position. Now I appeal to you, my dear brother, if this is any reply to the argument as presented by us.

2. You seem to me to have evaded the argument, by a long train of reasoning designed to establish the position, that if Christians are not entirely sanctified in this life, or if their sanctification is gradually carried on here, and completed at death, God will not be found to have been unfaithful to his promises. You say, "If God may be faithful in respect to the promise, that *all shall know him*, because he will fulfil it at a distant, future period, though for thousands of years it has remained unfulfilled; may he not be faithful in respect to his promise, 'that his people shall be made perfect in holiness,' if he fulfils it to them *a few days hence* — that is, when they are removed to the heavenly state — although it may not be fulfilled during the short period of the present life?"

I should like to know, when or where we have denied, or in any way controverted the position which you are here endeavoring to establish, or what bearing all this has upon the real question at issue between us; that is, whether we are authorized, in view of promises which you acknowledge embrace and proffer the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, to look to Christ to have those promises fulfilled in our experience, with the expectation and assurance of finding that "He is faithful that has promised, and will also do it." This is our position. This is the inference which we draw from the promises. The business of every one who replies to this argument, is to show, not that the promises do not authorize inferences which we never draw from them, but that they do not authorize this particular inference which we draw from them. This you have not attempted to do.

In what you have written upon the provisions and promises of divine grace, I have found but very little in respect to which I differ with you, and which does not constitute as essential an element of the doctrine which we maintain, as of yours. Let me request you, my dear brother, to read over what you have written upon these topics, with the thought distinctly before your mind, that the brethren to whom you are professedly replying, argue from what you acknowledge to be true respecting the provisions and promises of divine grace for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, that Christians are authorized to expect to attain to that state — just as they argue from the

revealed provisions and promises of grace for the pardon of sin, that sinners are authorized to seek for that blessing, with the expectation of enjoying it. When you have done this, let me request you to ask yourself, What have I said in the least degree adapted to prove that the conclusion which they draw from what I acknowledge to be true, is not a legitimate conclusion? What have I said that can in any proper sense be a reply to their arguments as they have presented them? May not all that I have said in reply to them be true, and the doctrine of Christian Perfection, as they present it, be true also? In view of these questions, I cheerfully submit it to you, my brother, to say whether any thing which you have written on this point can, with any propriety, be denominated a reply to our arguments.

But as the question, What are we authorized to *expect*, in view of what is now mutually acknowledged to be true of the provisions and promises of divine grace for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, is one of the main hinges on which the existing controversy turns, you will permit me to invite your attention to it still further. We say to you, that we look to the "God of peace, to be sanctified wholly," and "preserved blameless," to the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," with the assured expectation of being thus sanctified and preserved. To show the validity of such expectation, we cite the provisions and promises of grace, embracing and proffering to us this very blessing. What is your reply? "We grant," you say, "the truth of all that you have said respecting the extent and design of the provisions and promises of grace; but we deny the validity of the inference which you have drawn from them. We deny the propriety of the expectation which you indulge." "For unless there is evidence," you say, "that good men have attained or will attain to perfection in the present life, no one can properly indulge the *expectation*." Now if this principle be correct, it must be for this reason, *that when the gospel reveals special provisions for the bestowment of any blessing, whatever it may be, and when it reveals special promises, in which that blessing is specifically proffered to us, no person is authorized, in view of such provisions and promises, to indulge the hope of enjoying the blessing thus proffered to him, until he has determined the question whether good men have enjoyed or will enjoy that blessing.* This is the principle which you have assumed in the above declaration, and which must be true, as you will admit, if that declaration is true. For no one can show why revealed provisions and promises of grace should authorize in us the expectation of enjoying any one blessing which they proffer, and not another. Are you, my brother, prepared to maintain the validity of such a principle? Must we, when we find any blessing proffered to us through revealed provisions and promises of divine grace, first determine the fact that some persons — that "good men actually have enjoyed or will enjoy that blessing," before we can properly indulge the expectation of enjoying it ourselves?

Now the invalidity of this principle, and the perfect adequacy of the revealed provisions and promises of grace, as a foundation of rational expectation in respect to complete sanctification in this life, and all other blessings

proffered in such provisions and promises, I argue from the following considerations:

1. The common sense of mankind. Suppose a minister impresses the conviction fully and distinctly upon an audience, that God has made full and special provisions for the bestowment of some particular blessing, and that they are authorized by express promises, "exceedingly great and precious," to look to God for that blessing; the spontaneous and universal affirmation of the reason and common sense of that audience would be, "the blessing under consideration lies within the circle of rational expectation. We may set our hearts upon possessing this blessing, with the assured expectation of enjoying it." They would never dream of inquiring, whether "good men have enjoyed or will enjoy this blessing, in order to determine whether it is proper for them to indulge such expectation.

2. The most hallowed feelings and convictions of Christians, in the most hallowed moments of their Christian experience. Assure a believer who is intensely "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" that God has made and revealed special and abundantly adequate provisions for his complete sanctification in this life, and that he is authorized, by "exceedingly great and precious promises," to look to the "very God of peace," to be thus sanctified; what would be the effect upon the hallowed feelings thus awakened in his mind, if he were now assured that these provisions and promises do not authorize him to indulge the expectation of enjoying this or any other blessing proffered in such provisions and promises, till he has determined the fact, whether "good men have enjoyed or will enjoy such blessing." Would not his feelings be as perfectly shocked, agonized, and tortured, as those of the trembling Jailer would have been, if Paul and Silas, after assuring him that Christ had made full and special provisions for his salvation, and that if he would "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he should be saved," had added—You are not authorized, in view of these provisions and promises, to indulge the expectation of being saved. Till you have evidence that some have obtained or will obtain this salvation, it is not "proper for you to indulge the *expectation*." No; the most sacred feelings of all the holy, cry out against this principle, and in favor of the validity of the provisions and promises of divine grace, independent of all human experience and testimony, as a ground of rational expectation, in respect to any blessing which they proffer; and in respect to complete sanctification no less than any other.

3. The validity of revealed provisions and promises of grace, as a ground of rational expectation, is universally assumed and affirmed by all "devout Christians and orthodox divines," in respect to all blessings, with the single exception of complete sanctification in this life. Where is the devout Christian, or orthodox divine, who does not present the revealed provisions of grace pertaining to the *pardon of sin*, as a foundation, broad and sure, for a rational expectation of enjoying that blessing? Now why is the validity of the provisions and promises of grace, as a ground of rational expectation, universally affirmed in respect to the blessing of justification, and denied in

respect to that of sanctification? Why is it affirmed in respect to all blessings but this one? Respected instructor, will you answer this question?

4. Upon the validity of revealed provisions and promises of grace, as a ground of rational expectation, and not at all upon your principle, every true Christian, as a matter of fact, rests his hope of heaven, with all its purity and blessedness. I appeal to you, my brother, if this is not so in respect to your own hope? Now will you tell me, dear brother, that the provisions and promises of grace are an adequate foundation, on which to rest all our hopes for eternity; and that blood-bought provisions and promises equally free, full, and adequate, and emanating from the same source, are not a valid foundation on which to rest the expectation of complete sanctification in this life?

5. Every example of faith recorded in the Bible, is a refutation of the principle which you maintain, as the only ground of rational expectation, and a confirmation of that which I am defending. What did the faith, by which the ancient saints wrought the wonders recorded in the Bible, rest upon, but the revealed provisions and promises of grace? The faith by which Sarah, for example, "received strength to conceive seed when she was past age," rested not at all upon the ascertained fact, that good women had experienced or would experience the same thing; but upon the naked promise of God. "She counted him faithful that had promised." So in all other instances. Shall we proclaim, that the faith of those saints rested upon an inadequate foundation? If not, then the principle which you maintain, dear brother, is unfounded, and the opposite principle true.

6. The validity of the *provisions* of divine grace alone, as a ground of rational expectation, is directly affirmed by the Apostle, in Rom. viii. 2—4: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here the Apostle first affirms, that he has, by the grace of Christ, made certain attainments. He then affirms the propriety of the profession which he has made, from the fact, that to make provisions by which Christians may rise to such attainments, is the express object of Christ's death. The principle clearly, and to my mind, undeniably involved in the above passage, is this: when an individual professes to have made only such attainments as are manifestly proffered in the revealed provisions and promises of grace, there is nothing incredible in such professions; inasmuch as such provisions and promises are an adequate foundation of rational expectation. A profession of complete sanctification is just as credible as a profession of justification; for this all-sufficient reason — that both are alike embraced and proffered in the provisions and promises of grace. Why should it be thought by you a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead, the *spiritually* as well as the naturally dead, since the gospel proffers the means of its accomplishment?

7. The principle which you maintain, my brother, is the language of unbe-

lief exclusively, and would be ruinous, if inculcated upon Christians as of general application. When an individual meets with a blessing proffered to him through revealed provisions and promises of grace, what but *unbelief* could say to him, Such provisions and promises do not constitute a ground of rational expectation in regard to this blessing? "Until you have evidence that good men have enjoyed or will enjoy that blessing, it is not proper to indulge such expectation." Would you be willing, my brother, to proclaim such a principle to a young convert, or to any Christian? Would not the belief of it hang weights upon his faith, and drag him down under the influence of unbelief? What is preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, but proclaiming the provisions and promises of his grace as an all-sufficient ground of hope? To deny this, to proclaim the principle which you maintain, dear brother, what is it but unbelief? What is it but to reverse all the teachings of inspiration?

8. The principle which you maintain leaves us perfectly in the dark, in respect to the attainments which we may rationally hope to make. If we are permitted to assume the revealed provisions and promises of grace as an adequate ground of rational hope, the path before us is perfectly plain. We have nothing to do, but to "go on to perfection." If, however, we cannot properly indulge the expectation of attaining to perfection in holiness, until we have evidence that good men have made or will make such attainments, the same principle will hold equally true in respect to every other standard that can be named or imagined. Now who can tell us precisely to what degree of perfection Paul, or any other Christian, has attained or will attain? Thus, in respect to all rational expectation, in regard to spiritual attainments, we are left wholly in the dark. On what authority are we left in such a state of darkness, doubt, and perplexity as this? Where is the authority for making the attainments of good men, and not the promises of God, the standard of rational expectation?

9. No person would dare apply your principle to any subject but complete sanctification in this life—the last subject, in fact, my brother, to which it should be applied. "If the advocates of the doctrine of Perfection can fairly and conclusively prove," you say, "that any Christians *actually attain to sinless perfection during the present life*, the common doctrine is overthrown, and the controversy is determined in their favor. But if they fail of showing this, all they can prove respecting other points, will avail nothing." Would you be willing to make a similar declaration respecting the provisions of grace for the pardon of sin? Would you be willing to affirm that the revelation of provisions and promises embracing and proffering this blessing, apart from all knowledge of what men have done or will do in respect to the good thus proffered, does not present a hope upon which the sinner may properly lay hold, "as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast?" Now why is a principle applied to the provisions and promises pertaining to sanctification, which no Christian would dare apply in any other instance? If its application is legitimate here, it must be every where else.

10. Your principle, dear brother, will condemn the experience of every true convert on earth. You, perhaps, recollect the case of the African, who, under an overwhelming sense of sin, travelled hundreds of miles, and crossed the ocean to England, to learn about the "Christian's God that paid the debt." He was providentially led into a chapel, where he listened to a discourse illustrative of the plan of redemption. In the discourse, sin was presented as a debt—Christ by his atonement as paying the debt, and now proffering eternal life to all who believe on him. When this great consummation opened upon the mind of the benighted inquirer, he leaped up, and with a loud voice exclaimed, "I have found it!" Now, my brother, according to your principle, that minister had not, in all that he said, laid a foundation of rational hope in respect to eternal life; nor was it proper for the African to indulge the hope which he did on that occasion. Until he had "evidence that good men have enjoyed or will enjoy this blessing, it was not proper for him to indulge the *expectation*." For the same reason we must condemn the hope of every convert on earth, of which the above is an example. Peter also, at the pentecost, greatly erred, when he presented the promise of God as the ground of hope to the sinner. Are you prepared to maintain such a principle? I hope not. If not in respect to justification to eternal life, why in respect to complete sanctification in this life?

I might add other considerations adapted to establish the truth of the principle that the provisions and promises of grace are a ground of rational expectation. These, however, are abundantly sufficient. In view of such considerations, is it at all to be wondered at that the brethren at Princeton, and others who deny the doctrine of Christian Perfection, maintain that what you have admitted respecting the provisions and promises of grace, is tantamount to an admission of the truth of that doctrine?

PRAYERS FOR SANCTIFICATION.

As what I have already said admits of such a manifest and ready application to what you have written in respect to the argument drawn from the *prayers for perfect sanctification* recorded in the Bible, very little need be said on this subject. In the fact that Christ has taught his whole Church to pray for this blessing; that he himself prayed that Christians might attain to this state; and that holy men, who acted under the immediate influence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, made its attainment the great theme of their prayers, as well as meditation and teaching, you fully agree with us. Now we argue that a blessing revealed to us, as sustaining such a relation to prayer, must lie within the circle of rational expectation. In this form, dear brother, (and this is the only form in which we have presented the argument,) you have not replied to it at all. In respect to your professed reply to this argument I notice,—

1. The following admission: "And one thing more I hold to be unquestionable; that is, that God will certainly, in the highest and best sense, answer their [Christians'] prayers, and bestow upon them the precious blessing of complete sanctification; yea, will do exceeding abundantly above all

that they ask or think." How this can be true, and a prayer for complete sanctification, not only in eternity but in this life also, can be said to be answered at all, as far as this life is concerned, when no Christian ever was or ever will be sanctified during this life, is more than I can understand. How such prayer can be said to be answered in the "highest and best sense," on this supposition, is still more wonderful, unless it be maintained that partial sanctification is, in this life, a better state than perfect sanctification. Do you believe this? What else, my brother, does your admission imply?

2. You say that the Church, in all "past ages, have offered up the prayer dictated by Christ, 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.'" From the fact that this petition, though put up in faith, has not yet been fully answered, but will be hereafter, you argue that a prayer put up in faith for complete sanctification may be fully answered, though not immediately, nor even in this life. I reply that the cases are not at all parallel. When we pray for a blessing, which, from the nature of the case, can be granted only through successive centuries, that prayer is of course fully answered when the blessing comes in this form. It is very different, however, when we pray for a blessing proffered to us as a good to be enjoyed the present moment, as is the case with justification and sanctification. Such a blessing is to be expected the instant there is faith to receive it.

3. You ask me if I should like to hear a person put up such a prayer as this: "God, I thank thee that I am perfectly free from sin, and perfectly conformed to the holy image of Christ." I reply, —

(1.) That while I might not approve of a prayer in the form here presented, I should have no objection to hear individuals whose lives correspond with those of Zacharias and Elizabeth, as described in the Bible, thank the Lord that, through grace, they were "righteous before God, walking in all his commandments and ordinances blameless." I should have no objection to hear a person whose life corresponds with that of Paul, thank the Lord that, 'having obtained grace to be faithful,' he was able to appeal to God and men, "that in the sight of both he was holy, just, and unblamable." And what would this be but to thank the Lord that one is, in fact, completely sanctified?

(2.) I should much rather hear even such a prayer as the one proposed by you, than listen to one in perfect keeping with the doctrine which you maintain. For example: "May the 'very God of peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' May we at all times and under all circumstances have grace to 'stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' Now, Lord, while we thus pray, and pray in full view of the promise, 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it,' we expect no such thing. While we live we expect, at all times and in all circumstances, voluntarily to withhold from thee the perfect love and obedience which thou requirest of us, which we are fully able to render, and for the rendering of which we are aware that abundant provisions are made and revealed in the gospel of thy grace."

Would not such a prayer, dear brother, be in perfect keeping with your doctrine?

HAS SANCTIFICATION BEEN ATTAINED IN THIS LIFE?

This is the second question at issue between us, whether the Bible affirms or teaches that any have attained or will attain to complete sanctification in this life. Two positions have been assumed by me in respect to this question.

1. The sacred writers plainly teach that some have attained to this state.

2. That to this state the Church will be brought during the progress of her future history.

That the reader may have our argument on this point somewhat distinctly before his mind, I will cite two passages from an article of mine, published some time since in the *Biblical Repository*. It is due to myself, in alluding to that article, to say, that after it was put into the editor's hands, it was so mutilated by him that I should hardly have recognized it had it not appeared under my name; at least one-third of the article, the very parts upon which myself and friends placed the most reliance, being suppressed. The following paragraphs, however, appear much as I wrote them. The first presents a portion of the testimony of the Bible to the complete sanctification of Paul, and presents it under the following heads:

"1. There is but one act of his Christian life recorded by the sacred writers which is of a doubtful character. I refer to his controversy with Barnabas. With this exception, (and by but a few is even this regarded as an exception,) his whole Christian character, as portrayed by the pen of inspiration, is 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing.'

"2. The apostle very frequently presents himself as an example to Christians, without any intimation that in copying that example they will not do their entire duty. Phil. iv. 9: 'Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.' Phil. iii. 17: 'Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.' 1 Cor. xi. 1: 'Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ;' that is, since I am an imitator of Christ, be ye imitators of me. Who would dare to apply such language to himself, who was conscious of not presenting to Christians a perfect pattern for their imitation?

"3. The apostle appeals to his hearers and to God, as witnesses of the entire purity of his character. 1 Thes. ii. 16: 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how *holily and justly and unblamably* we behaved ourselves among you that believe.' Acts xx. 26: 'Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.' Who that was conscious of continued short comings in duty, would dare to apply such language to himself? In Acts xxiv. 16, the apostle declares that his aim was to have always a 'conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' In 2 Tim. i. 3, and elsewhere, he represents himself as being in this very state: 'I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience.' Again: 'I have

lived in all good conscience before God unto this day.' In 1 Tim. i. 5, the apostle declares that the 'end of the commandment,' that is, all that God requires, 'is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.' By what language can a man profess perfection in holiness, if the apostle in such passages has not done it?

"4. The general representations which the apostle gives of his character, lead to the same conclusion. Gal. ii. 20: 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.'"

As further proof, I now refer to Phil. iii. 12-17, the passage so often cited to disprove the doctrine of Christian Perfection. The apostle here represents his character in two points of light. 1. In reference to a state of glory consequent on having victoriously finished his race as a Christian. In this respect he of course was not perfect; just as Christ in the same respect was not perfect while in a state of humiliation on earth. 2. In reference to moral or Christian character, contemplating himself as a runner in the Christian race for the crown of glory.

That the apostle lays claim to perfection in *holiness*, is evident from the following considerations: 1. He represents himself as putting forth his entire energies in the Christian race, which is all that is requisite to perfection in Christian character. 2. In this respect he declares himself perfect: "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." 3. He calls upon Christians to imitate his example, and that without any qualification: "Brethren, be ye followers together of me." If the apostle had regarded himself as coming short in his duty, he certainly would not have thus called upon Christians to imitate his example.

An objection is sometimes made to the explanation here given of verse 12. It was needless for the apostle to affirm that he was not yet perfected in glory. Of this his readers were of course aware.

I answer, while the apostle did affirm his perfection in holiness, it was necessary at the same time that he should affirm that he had not "attained" and was not "perfect" in glory, inasmuch as the error was then being spread abroad that the "resurrection was already past," and thus the "faith of some had been overthrown."

The same thing the apostle affirms of himself, Rom. viii. 2: "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"—the "law of sin and death" referred to in chapter 7. Such is the testimony of an inspired apostle to his own attainments as a Christian; testimony applicable only to a state of entire sanctification.

The other passage, which I cite from the same article in the Biblical Repository, presents a portion of the evidence which the Scriptures afford that the Church will attain to this state during the progress of her future history:

"1. For this glorious consummation Christ has taught his whole Church to pray, 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as in heaven.' There is certainly a very strong presumption in favor of the occurrence of

any consummation, in the fact that Christ has required his whole Church to pray for it.

"2. For this consummation Christ not only prayed, but declared its occurrence to be essential to the conversion of the world. John xvii. 20-23.

"3. To bring about this consummation, is one of the revealed objects of his redemption, and purposes of his grace. Eph. v. 25-27, 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' The phrase, 'by the word,' that is, a preached gospel, shows, that this passage is to be applied to the Church in this world. Eph. i. 9, 10: 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him.'

"In the first passage above cited, we learn that it is the object of Christ's redemption, perfectly to sanctify his Church. In the last, it is declared to be his purpose, in the 'dispensation of the fulness of time,' to accomplish this very object. What other meaning can we attach to the phrase, to 'gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth?'"

"4. God has unconditionally promised this very consummation to the Church, Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Heb. viii. 10-12; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; Jer. l. 20; Ezek. xxxvii. 23. Here I would remark, that a promise may be unconditional to the Church and conditional to all individuals of whom the Church is composed. God, for example, unconditionally promised to the seed of Abraham the land of Canaan. Yet no one generation could take possession of that land without faith in that promise. See Heb. iii. 19 and Num. xxxii. 15. Such, however, was the nature of the promise, as to render it certain that some generation would believe, and take possession of the blessing. So of the promises of the new covenant; '*some must enter in.*' Yet such is the nature of those promises, that those only who understand them and embrace them by faith, can 'enter in.' There remaineth, therefore, a glorious consummation to the Church. God shall 'sprinkle clean water upon her and she shall be clean.' 'From all her filthiness and from all her idols shall He cleanse her.' 'In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.' 'Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with any of their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions.'

"When will the Church understand the 'the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints?' Then shall her 'peace be as a river, and her righteousness as the waves of the sea.'

"5. The same thing is implied in other passages relating to the future glory of the Church. Isa. xi. 1-9. The entire description here given is applicable

only to a state of perfect moral purity. 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. If sin remains in the bosom of the Church, there will be something to 'hurt and destroy.' See, also, Isa. ii. 4 and lxxv. 25; Micah iv. 1-4; Zech. xiv. 20. 'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD,' &c.

"6. It is declared that the Church shall come into this state before the 'battle of the great day of God Almighty,' which is to precede the millennium. Rev. xix. 6-8: 'And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*' What emblem can express a state of perfect moral purity, if this does not? That this is the real meaning of the sacred writer, is evident from verse 14, in which the moral purity of heaven is expressed by precisely the same emblem, 'fine linen, white and clean.' Here we have the actual accomplishment of the object of redemption referred to in Eph. v. 25-27, and of the purpose of divine grace spoken of in Eph. i. 9, 10: 'The marriage of the Lamb,' which is to take place on earth, 'will come,' when and only when Christ shall 'present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;' but when it shall be 'holy and without blemish.' I conclude, then, that the Bible teaches us, that some have already attained to a state of entire sanctification in this life, and that to this glorious consummation the Church is hereafter to be brought."

I will now, my brother, consider your reply to the argument of which the above extracts are a specimen.

1. You have not even attempted to show that a single text has been misapplied by me, by a reference to the text and context, the common, and as I suppose, the only proper method of "reasoning out of the Scriptures."

2. The principle assumed in your reply, in its legitimate application to the proof texts commonly cited in support of the doctrine which you maintain, will subvert entirely the foundation on which that doctrine rests. Your principle is this — instead of showing, by a reference to the text and context, and to the general usage of language, by the sacred writers in similar cases, that these texts have been misconstrued and misapplied by us, you adduce other passages, in which language somewhat similar is used, and upon which a restrictive construction must be put. Hence you conclude, that a similar construction may or should be put upon the phraseology of the texts cited by me. Let us now apply this principle to some of the most important texts cited to prove the doctrine which you maintain:

"There is no man that sinneth not." "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." "In many things we offend all."

Compare these with the declaration of our Savior, "There is none good but one, that is God." Here, according to the literal construction, goodness is positively denied of every being in existence but God. Hence all admit, that a restrictive construction should be put upon this passage. If so, why

not, if your principle is correct, in respect to the passages above cited? So in respect to all passages cited to sustain this theory.

3. In your reply, you have entirely overlooked the fundamental principle of interpretation to be applied in all such cases; namely, *when a restrictive construction is to be put upon the language of the sacred writers, the context, together with the circumstances and object of the writers, and common usage in similar cases, clearly indicate the necessity of such construction.* Now a legitimate application of the above principle will clearly show that such a construction ought to be put upon passages like those above noticed — passages so universally cited in favor of the doctrine which you maintain — and that no such construction ought to be put upon passages which, in their literal meaning, affirm the entire sanctification of such men as Paul, &c.

In explaining passages of the former class, let us first notice some general facts which characterize the phraseology of the sacred writers under similar circumstances:

(1.) When the sacred writers would designate a fact which, though not true of every individual, is yet true of the great majority of men, they make use of universal or general terms. Of such usage, Jer. ix. 4, may be cited, as an example: "Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders."

(2.) When they affirm a fact which is true of all men, at some period of their lives, though not at others, they use similar phraseology. The declaration of our Savior, above cited, together with all the declarations of the sacred writers respecting the condition of mankind as sinners, may be adduced as examples of this class. "There is none good, no not one," &c. Now a careful examination of such passages as 1 Kings viii. 46; Prov. xx. 9; Eccl. vii. 20, and 1 John i. 8, quoted by you, in the light of the above principles, will render it demonstrably evident, that the exclusive design of these writers in such declarations is, not to affirm the fact that no saint ever was or will be completely sanctified in this life, but that all mankind are in fact sinners. The most that can be made out of the declaration of James, "In many things we offend all," is the affirmation of the fact, not that any as Christians are not entirely sanctified, but that we all are aggravated sinners in the sight of God. Hence, if we become "masters," or severely judge our fellow-sinners, we ourselves shall receive the heaviest judgment of God for our own sins. So of all other passages cited to prove this doctrine.

I am happy in being able to say, that one of the most distinguished Biblical professors and commentators in the United States, an advocate, too, of your doctrine, has avowed the opinion which I have expressed, in respect to the true meaning of almost every one if not all the passages above cited.

Let us now see whether the principle, above illustrated, requires, that a similar construction be put upon the passages cited to prove that some have attained to a state of entire sanctification in this life.

To test the question, let us first consider the most important passage cited

by you as parallel to those now under consideration. 1 John iii. 9: "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Now the context clearly shows that a restrictive construction should be put upon this passage. The object of the writer, like that of James, is to affirm the error of certain teachers who maintained that men's hearts may be pure while leading immoral lives. Hence, in the preceding verses, he says, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin, is of the devil." The object of the apostle, then, is not to affirm that the real Christian never commits a sin, but to affirm the absolute incompatibility of the co-existence of a holy heart and an unholy life. A restrictive construction, therefore, should be put upon his language. Let us see if similar circumstances demand that a similar construction should be put upon the passages cited by us to prove that some have attained to complete sanctification in this life. For example — Luke i. 6: "They were both righteous before God" — that is, in the sight of God, or in the divine estimation — "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Here an individual, under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and consequently without any shadow of mistake, tells us how the character of two saints stood in the divine estimation, and affirms that in God's estimation that character was without fault. Now why should a restrictive construction be put upon this testimony? What is there in the context, in the object of the writer, or in any attendant circumstances, to demand or justify it? When a being who has a perfect knowledge of every element that enters into the character of another, affirms that that character is morally faultless, every principle of correct interpretation forbids that a restrictive construction be put upon his language. Such is the instance before us. But Zacharias sinned after this. So did Adam, after being perfectly sanctified. If the character of Zacharias and Elizabeth, however, was in God's sight blameless, before the events recorded in this connection, much more must we suppose it to have been after those scenes; notwithstanding the single fault of one of them here recorded.

Look now at the testimony of Paul to his own sanctification. Gal. ii. 20: "I am crucified with Christ," &c. In Rom. viii. 6, 7, the apostle affirms that the individual who is "dead," or crucified with Christ, is "freed from sin." He here unqualifiedly affirms that he himself was thus dead, thus crucified with Christ; in other words, that he was free from sin. This affirmation he repeats in various forms, and in the strongest conceivable language, in the remaining part of the verse. Now what is there in the text, context, circumstances, or object of the writer, which require that a restrictive construction shall be put upon his language? Nothing. Such a construction, therefore, is wholly unauthorized. If the design of Paul, in this passage, is not to affirm his own sanctification, what is his object? It must be to assert the fact that he had made very high or uncommon attainments. Who ever used such language to express such an idea?

Again—"Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ;" that is—since I imitate Christ, do ye imitate me. "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." If a literal construction be put upon such passages, then the apostle undoubtedly affirms his complete sanctification. If a restrictive, this is his true meaning.—There are many things which you "have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me," which you must do; there are others which you must by all means avoid, if the God of peace shall be with you. Is this the meaning of the apostle? Would you be willing to put such a construction upon his language?

Suppose I should write a letter to you, in which I should appeal to you, that when under your instruction, I had in your sight led a "holy, just, and blameless life," when you knew, and were also aware of the fact that I knew, that in your estimation I was, in many respects, unholy, unjust, and worthy of blame; what would you think of such an appeal? Suppose that in the same letter, and in view of the same facts, I should appeal to God, that in his estimation, also, I had been "holy, just, and blameless!" You would justly regard it as blasphemous. Just such an appeal Paul makes to God and men, if we put a restrictive construction upon his language; and if we do not, he affirms his complete sanctification. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

There are other considerations, which show clearly, that a restrictive construction should not be put upon the apostle's testimony to his own attainments:

1. He was writing to individuals converted through his instrumentality from the darkness and idolatry of Paganism to the light and blessedness of Christianity.

2. He was writing to them when they were in the infancy of spiritual and intellectual attainments, and when they were in the simplicity and warmth of their first love.

3. He was writing, and they were aware of the fact, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Individuals, under such circumstances, (and of this Paul must have been aware when he wrote,) would of course put the fullest construction upon the testimony of an inspired apostle to his own attainments. For these reasons we are bound to do the same.

4. The apostle, under such circumstances, uses a phraseology in expressing his own attainments, which no advocate of your views was ever known to apply to himself. Now if the apostle had not designed that the fullest construction should have been put upon his language, would he not have carefully guarded his readers against an error into which, without such precaution, they would naturally have fallen? It appears to me, then, demonstrably evident, that violence is done to all the laws of correct interpretation, when a restrictive construction is put upon the testimony of the apostle to his own spiritual attainments; that is, when it is affirmed that he did not intend to assert his own complete sanctification.

Some additional considerations, which you have offered to show that a restrictive construction should be put upon such passages, now claim our attention.

1. "The current representation of the inspired writers, that the religion of God's people, throughout the present life, is progressive." As proof of this you cite the command "Grow in grace," and refer to the Christian warfare, as described in the Bible. To this it is replied: entire sanctification implies obedience to all the commands of God. Among these commands, the following are prominent. "Grow in grace." "Fight the good fight of faith." To grow in grace, therefore, and fight the good fight of faith, in the Bible sense, is essential to entire sanctification. Besides, if the command, "Grow in grace," implies a gradual renunciation of sin, as your explanation makes it, we have a positive command requiring us to give up sin, *gradually* and not immediately!

2. The "*desires of Christians after holiness.*" Desire for an object, you argue, proves the present absence of that object. As the Bible represents all Christians as "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," this fact implies the present absence of the perfect holiness desired. I answer:

(1.) This argument, if valid, would prove that Christians now have no holiness at all. The Bible describes them as "hungering and thirsting" not merely after *perfect* nor even *more* righteousness, but "after righteousness."

(2.) As a perpetual increase in holiness is an essential element of entire sanctification, so there must always be in the mind of a person thus sanctified a corresponding desire. Hence, to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" is an essential element of entire sanctification, and as consistent with that state as with a state of partial holiness.

3. "*The prayers which believers offer for themselves.*" The remarks under the last head are equally applicable to prayer, and show clearly, that continued prayer for entire sanctification, is an essential element of such a state, and just as consistent with *perfect* as *partial* holiness; inasmuch as it implies the petition that all our *continually expanding* powers may be set apart and consecrated to the love and service of God.

4. "All Christians suffer *affliction.*" Christ, while in a state of complete sanctification, "learned obedience from the things which he *suffered.*" So may the Christian in the same state. He may learn this obedience also from "scourging," received for sins long since committed.

5. "Finally, I make my appeal," you say, "to the *consciousness of the most advanced Christians* — the Baxters, the Mathers, the Brainerds, the Edwardses, the Martyns, and the Paysons," &c. In reply, I might appeal to the consciousness of many on the opposite side — such as James B. Taylor, Wesley, Fletcher, &c. I will adduce the testimony of a witness, however, whose authority you will not question, — that of Paul. Paul affirms that he served God "*with a pure conscience.*" The witnesses adduced by you affirm that they did not thus serve God. Whose testimony ought to have the most

weight with us, in determining this doctrine? You recollect that Dr. Cornelius, on his death bed, required that all his private papers should be burned. This he required for the avowed reason, that if his memoir should be written, the Church would copy after him instead of Christ. I am sorry that in support of the doctrine which you maintain, you have felt it necessary to appeal to a principle which the dying Cornelius condemned.

SEVENTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS.

In reply to what you have said respecting Rom. vii. 14-25, I will simply state the following facts:

1. During the first three or four centuries of the Christian era, the entire Church, who received this epistle directly from the apostle, without exception understood him as referring in this passage to his experience, not as a Christian, but as a sinner, a Pharisee, in legal bondage under the power of sin. Did the entire primitive Church misunderstand his meaning?
2. The history of the change which took place in regard to this chapter, is full of instruction; but as you are familiar with that controversy, and, to save space, I will not repeat it.*
3. The most learned and distinguished Biblical critics in this country and Europe, advocates, too, of the doctrine which you maintain, after a most careful application of the laws of interpretation to this passage, have come to the conclusion that the meaning which the primitive Church attached to it is the true meaning. I refer to such commentators as your own associate and my venerable instructor, Prof. Stuart, of this country, and Prof. Tholuck, of Germany.
4. These commentators have demonstrated the fact that this passage, instead of describing Christian experience, actually describes the experience even of heathen, as recorded by themselves, at the time the apostle wrote.
5. It appears to me perfectly absurd, to suppose that the apostle would require Christians, as he has done, Rom. vi. 11, to "reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and then attempt to enforce that sentiment, as your explanation makes him,

The reader who is interested to examine this subject farther, is referred to Prof. Stuart's Commentary on this chapter. Prof. Stuart is an associate with Dr. Woods. He shows very clearly that the apostle is describing a legal experience; and that this chapter, from the 14th to the 25th verse, is the antithesis of the 8th chapter.

In his "Excursus VI.," he gives a full account of the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius, and says, "It will be admitted by those who are well read in the history of Christian doctrine, that Augustine was the first who suggested the idea that it (this chapter) must be applied to Christian experience. This he did, however, in the heat of dispute with Pelagius." "He recanted his former opinion, and became a strenuous advocate for an interpretation which, through him, has gained extensive ground among Christians, and maintains its footing among many down to the present hour."

He goes on to say, that he cannot but believe the time is not far distant when there will be only one opinion among Christians in respect to this passage, "as there was but one before the dispute of Augustine with Pelagius." See his valuable Commentary, pp. 559-62. Prof. Stuart is not a believer in the doctrine of Christian Perfection, as this same "Excursus" shows. Nevertheless, it is an instructive article in reference to the true interpretation of this passage. — *Ed. Evan.*

by assuring them that as a believer in Christ, he found himself not "dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God," but "carnal, sold under sin;" and that this would be the experience of all true believers to the end of time. Who can read over this passage and then suppose that the apostle intends here to say — this is the "new creature" which every man becomes who is "in Christ?"

6. Every real Christian, when in the actual exercise of simple faith in Christ, finds his experience portrayed not in the 7th, but 8th chapter of Romans. On the other hand, when in unbelief, when "seeking righteousness, not by faith, but as it were by the deeds of the law," by dint of resolution, he finds his experience not in the 8th, but 7th chapter.

The true meaning of this passage, then, is this: Here the apostle is describing his experience as a Pharisee, seeking righteousness as the Jew did, "not by faith, but as it were by the deeds of the law." In the 8th chapter, he describes his experience as a Christian, in the exercise of faith in Christ. So the entire primitive Church understood him. So the laws of interpretation require us to understand him.

I now come to the last general topic on which you have written.

"THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION AND OF THE COMMON DOCTRINE."

After showing very conclusively that the prospect of attaining to a state of perfect *purity* as well as glory in a future world, may act with great and similar power in inducing vigorous efforts after the state thus presented to our faith, you adduce two reasons to prove that your doctrine has a great advantage, in respect to practical effect, over the opposite doctrine:

1. "This expectation of ours stands before us in close connection with circumstances which make a strong appeal to the principles of the human mind, and powerfully move the springs of human action. That perfect holiness, to which we are taught to aspire, is associated in our thoughts with the ineffable joys and glories of the world above, with the presence of the exalted Savior, and with things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, an object so sublime, and excellent, and attractive in itself, and surrounded with such invisible and celestial glories."

2. "The expectation which Christians generally entertain, has greatly the advantage over that which the Oberlin doctrine inspires in respect to *certainty*." "They *know* that if they are true Christians, they shall reach their object, and shall reach it soon; that when they are absent from the body they shall be present with the Lord, and shall then be holy as he is holy."

I do not know that any part of your articles has excited greater surprise in my mind than this. At the commencement of your remarks, you lay down, with great distinctness and emphasis, the principle that it is wrong for an individual to claim as peculiar to his system, any elements which belong alike to the opposite system. You then censure me somewhat severely, (but not too severely, if I have done what you suppose,) for affirmed transgressions of this principle. Now, my brother, in comparing the moral

tendency of the two doctrines under consideration, you have fastened upon two elements equally common, and equally essential to each, and on the authority of these common elements, affirmed that one of these doctrines has, in respect to "practical effect," greatly the advantage over the other. What would you have thought if the advocates of the doctrine of Christian Perfection had fastened upon these two facts as proof, that the practical effect of that doctrine is greatly superior to that of the opposite doctrine? They might with the same propriety do so. For each of these facts is as essential an element of our system as of yours. The *heavenly* state as presented in each of the systems is perfectly identical, and is presented to the faith of the Christian with precisely the same *certainty*. What advantage then, can your doctrine have over the opposite doctrine, on the ground of these two common elements?

"The perfect holiness to which we are taught to aspire," you say, "is associated in our thoughts with the ineffable glories of the world above," &c. In the mind of a believer in the doctrine of Christian Perfection, the same holiness is associated with the same glories in a future world, with this additional expectation, which your system totally extinguishes, the glorious hope of "standing perfect and complete in all the will of God" in this life. Christians under the influence of your system, you say, pray for and aim at perfection in holiness, with the *certainty* of attaining it in a future world. Christians, under the influence of the opposite system, aim at and pray for the same perfection in holiness, with precisely the same certainty of attaining it there. Thus far, there is a perfect identity between the two systems. In respect to *this life, however*, there is a wide difference between them. Under the influence of the former, Christians aim at and pray for perfection in holiness in this life with the absolute certainty of not attaining it in this life, (which is all that I ever said, though you seem to reprove me as saying that you teach that you aim at perfection with the certainty of *never* attaining it.) Under the influence of the latter, they aim at and pray for complete sanctification in this life, with the *glorious hope* of attaining it. The Bible affirms, that Christians "*are saved by hope*." The system that extinguishes hope prevents salvation. Your system, by extinguishing all hope of complete redemption from sin in this life, prevents that redemption. The opposite system, by lighting up this hope, brings that redemption nigh. Here is a difference between the two systems in respect to "practical effect," as wide as light and darkness.

We will now return to a consideration of the prospect of perfection in holiness and in glory in a future world, as motives to induce energetic action at the present time after such blessings. It is readily admitted that the prospect of perfection in holiness in a future world, may operate with the same power to induce us to seek such perfection in that world, as the prospect of perfection in glory there, may to induce similar efforts after perfection in glory in that world, and that the doctrine of Christian Perfection and the opposite doctrine has each precisely the same

advantages in both these respects. There is a fundamental difference, however, between perfection in holiness and glory as presented in the Bible, a difference which you have not noticed. The *latter* we are required to seek only as a *future good*. Perfection in holiness, on the other hand, we are required to seek not only as a good to be possessed in a future state, but also as a present good, and to practise as a present duty. Now, to test the "practical effect" of these two doctrines, they must be compared, not in respect to a future state, for there they are equal; but in respect to their influence in exciting to *present* duty, and to seek after *present* completeness in holiness. In this respect the advantage which the doctrine of Christian Perfection possesses over the opposite doctrine is as great as can possibly be conceived. Under the influence of this doctrine, the mind is perpetually operated upon by the absolute assurance, that in fixing its faith upon Christ to be sanctified wholly, and preserved in that state, it will be thus sanctified and preserved, and that in turning away from Him, there is the same certainty of falling under the power of sin, and under the wrath of God. Thus the mind is continually operated upon by two of the strongest possible motives to implicit faith and energetic action, the certainty of life in looking to Christ, and of death in turning away from him. What motive more efficient could have been presented to those wounded and dying in the wilderness, to induce them to fix their eyes upon the brazen serpent, than the absolute certainty of a perfect restoration to health if they did it, and the equal certainty of death, if they did it not. In such a relation precisely does this doctrine place the mind to faith in Christ, and to the duty required of us at the present moment. On the other hand, the opposite doctrine presents motives, in the highest degree conceivable, adapted to excite unbelief, and palsy effort in reference to the perfect holiness *now* required. It absolutely extinguishes hope, as we have seen on the one hand, and excites perfect despair on the other. It requires us to exercise faith in Christ for present complete sanctification without a ray of hope of exercising it — yes, with the absolute certainty of not exercising the faith requisite to the attainment of that state. It requires us to aim at the discharge of our entire present duty, with the absolute certainty of failing to accomplish our object.

In the interview referred to in your article, you told me that you had just before assured your students that they might look to Christ for the complete supply of every necessity! What if, in the true spirit of your theory, you had added: If you attempt to exercise the faith necessary to attain the good referred to, there is an absolute certainty that you will not do it? What could you have said more perfectly adapted to produce unbelief? Again, one of your students told me that at the commencement of your present theological year, yourself, I think it was, in a public prayer meeting, exhorted every student to "*resolve to do his entire duty during this whole year.*" What if you had added, If you form this resolution, and attempt to carry it into practice, there is an abundant certainty that you will fail to accomplish your object? What more could you have said to prevent the formation of any fixed determination, and to palsy all effort put forth to carry it into accomplishment?

Yet this is an unvarnished exhibition of the "practical effect" of this doctrine. The above presents an exhibition equally unvarnished of the "practical effect" of the opposite doctrine.

Permit me to say, that I was not a little interested to perceive that in attempting to show the superior advantages which your doctrine has over the opposite doctrine, in respect to "practical effect," all that you could say was, to point out certain elements equally common and essential to the two, and on the ground of these common elements to claim a great superiority for the former.

CONCLUSION.

I close this communication with a few remarks of a miscellaneous character.

I. I will notice the charge of wrong and unfairness which you bring against me in representing the belief that the provisions and promises of the gospel embrace and proffer the entire sanctification of Christians in this life, as peculiar to those who hold the doctrine of Christian Perfection; whereas the belief of this same precious doctrine has been held by devout Christians and orthodox divines of all ages. I have already said all that I particularly desire to say on this point, in the *New York Evangelist*. I will only specify the following facts, and leave the reader to decide whether I have erred in the matter as you suppose.

1. The doctrine that provisions are made for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, and that the promises embrace and proffer this state, is to be met with, as far as ~~my~~ knowledge extends, in no Creed or Confession of Faith published by any class of Christians holding the doctrine which you maintain.

2. The professors of Princeton deny the existence of such provisions, &c., and also the fact, that the belief of the Church has been and is as you represent. They also express astonishment at your assertions on the subject. In this opinion the Editor of the *Western Presbyterian*, who was educated in the bosom of new schoolism, unites. Had the standing belief of the Church been as you represent, could these brethren have been ignorant of the fact?

3. I had never heard such a view of the gospel presented, and I have yet to meet with the first layman among our churches who will affirm that he had ever heard the same from his religious teachers.

4. The controversy commenced on this very question, the extent of the provisions and promises of grace for the sanctification of Christians in this life. In the early part of this controversy our opponents did not avow an agreement with us on this point, and as far as I know, it was admitted that if we could prove that provisions and promises are revealed in the gospel for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, the question was settled in favor of the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

II. While it is now being proclaimed as the doctrine of the Church, that provision is made in the gospel for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, it is of great importance, that the public should know what the advocates of your doctrine really mean, when they proclaim this doctrine.

When they affirm that provision is made for the pardon of sin, we readily understand their meaning. It is this: The blessing of pardon is brought, by the revelation of such provisions, within the circle of rational expectation. But when they maintain that provisions are revealed in the gospel for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, they mean no such thing. This state, according to their system, notwithstanding such provisions, lies as entirely without the circle of rational hope, as far as this life is concerned, as salvation does to lost spirits. Permit me to say that such provisions appear very much like the provisions of grace for the salvation of the non-elect, according to the doctrine of the Old School. Who does not perceive at once the infinite absurdity of maintaining, if any appropriate meaning is to be attached to our words, that provisions are made for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, and then to affirm that that state lies without the circle of rational expectation? Can any one tell us what kind of provisions those are, and what brethren mean when they affirm their existence?

III. Permit me here to express freely my views of what appears to me to be the inconsistency and absurdity of admitting what you have admitted in your articles, and still denying the doctrine of entire sanctification. There is always something absurd and contradictory in error, when all its elements are distinctly apprehended. Truth, on the other hand, is perfectly beautiful and lovely in itself, and harmonious in all its proportions. I will suppose that you rise in the house of God and propose, as the subject of your discourse, to establish the following propositions.

1. Perfect holiness in this life is definitely required of us in the Bible.
2. Perfect obedience to every command of God all are naturally able to render.
3. Provisions abundantly adequate are revealed in the gospel to render us in this life, "perfect and complete in all the will of God."
4. We are authorized and required in the Bible, by promises "exceeding great and precious," to look to the "very God of peace" to be "sanctified wholly, and preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
5. To render us thus perfect in this life is one great and express object for which the Holy Spirit was given, the Church organized, and the ministry and ordinances appointed.
6. That we may attain to this state in this life, we are required by the express example and instructions of Christ and his inspired apostles, constantly to pray, and to "pray in faith, nothing wavering," and at this state we are required as constantly to aim.
7. This state is, in this life, actually attainable by us.
8. No one is authorized in view of the truth of any one of these propositions, or all of them taken together, to pray for, aim at, or set his heart upon attaining a state of complete sanctification in this life, with the rational expectation of doing it.
9. No man ever did or ever will, in this life, attain to this state.

Would you be willing to undertake to sustain, before any intelligent audience, these nine propositions? Would a full belief, apprehension and appreciation of the import of the first seven, at all prepare their minds for the reception of the last two propositions? Would not every intelligent hearer, who was ignorant of your real views, by the time you had announced the seventh proposition, be fully convinced that you were an advocate of the doctrine of Christian Perfection? Would he not be astounded at the annunciation of the last two, after he had listened to the preceding propositions? To lay a proper foundation for the last two, should not almost all the preceding ones be reversed? On the other hand, what better foundation conceivable could be laid for the establishment of the doctrine of Christian Perfection, than the admission of the first seven propositions as affirmed by the word of God? Let these propositions stand, and reverse the last two, so as to make them affirm this doctrine, and then your discourse presents a perfect and beautiful consistency throughout. Does truth carry upon its face palpable and undeniable marks of absurdity and inconsistency; while error bears throughout, features equally distinct and manifest, of beauty and consistency?

IV. You will permit me also to notice an inconsistency equally palpable between the doctrine which you maintain and a principle which yourself, and all "evangelical Christians and orthodox divines," proclaim as a fundamental principle of the gospel. It is this: No one will or can be saved who lives in the habitual indulgence of any known sin, or in the continued neglect of any known and acknowledged duty. In your articles, supreme and perfect love to God, and impartial love to man, together with the entire consecration of our powers to God, are affirmed as a known and acknowledged duty. It is also affirmed as a known and acknowledged fact, that to render this love and obedience we have adequate power, and that by availing ourselves, as we may and ought to do, of the revealed provisions and promises of divine grace, we actually may do it, and that nothing prevents our doing it, but a voluntary withholding from God what we know he justly requires of us, and what it is practicable for us to render to him. Yet while you maintain that all Christians will be saved, you also maintain that every such Christian, during every period of his earthly existence, will voluntarily withhold from God what he knows and acknowledges God rightfully requires of him, and he actually may render. What is this but to affirm and teach, that every Christian does live in the habitual indulgence of known sin, and in the continual neglect of known duty? Is it said that Christians repent of the sins under consideration? Very true. According to your theory, however, this very repentance contains the element of voluntary disobedience of which we are speaking. How can an individual advocate your doctrine, and avow the principle above referred to? And can a doctrine which so palpably contradicts *that principle*, be a doctrine of the Bible?

V. I will now notice one fact de-veloped in the progress of this controversy, which impresses my mind with the most perfect assurance not only that

your doctrine is untrue, but that it will soon lose its hold upon the public mind. It is this: It has now become perfectly visible, that it enters as a fundamental element into this doctrine, that the *revealed promises and provisions of grace* are not an adequate foundation of hope. Can such a doctrine be true? Can it long retain the confidence of believers in the "law and the testimony?" We shall all find it necessary to affirm with the brethren of the Old School, that provisions are not made for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, or admit, that the attainment of this state is an object of rational hope, just as much as pardon, or eternal life; and for the same reason, to wit: the provisions and promises of grace proffer to us all these blessings alike. Suppose the bare fact, irrespective of all knowledge of the manner in which the gospel has been or will be received by sinners, were revealed to a heathen that Christ has made provision for the pardon of his sins, and now offers him eternal life on condition that he will accept of his mediation, who would deny that that revelation has rendered these blessings, to that individual, objects of rational hope? If no one would deny this, then the doctrine which you maintain cannot be true.

VI. You will permit me here to notice what appears to me a manifest inconsistency in admitting what you have respecting the provisions and promises of grace, and then maintaining that the question whether complete sanctification in this life is an object of rational expectation, is not the great question of practical interest with us as Christians. You fully admit, 1. That it is by availing ourselves of the provisions and embracing the promises of grace by faith, that we are to make all the spiritual attainments which we can hope to make in this life. 2. That the promises and provisions of grace definitely proffer complete sanctification in this life and nothing less. 3. That the revelation of these provisions and promises authorizes the expectation of attaining to *some* degree of holiness in this life. 4. You then maintain, that the great practical question with us is not what degree of holiness does the revelation of such promises and provisions authorize us to expect; but "have we evidence that good men have attained, or will attain, to entire sanctification in this life." Who does not see a palpable inconsistency here? Who does not see that when God definitely proffers to us, through the provisions and promises of his grace, complete sanctification in this life, that the great practical question with us is, are we authorized by such revelation, to lay hold by faith of these provisions and promises with the expectation of receiving the blessings which they proffer? Who does not also perceive the strange inconsistency of maintaining that provisions and promises proffering *perfect holiness* and nothing less, are to be embraced by faith, with the expectation of attaining only *partial holiness*?

VII. I will now notice one or two important misquotations from my work, in your articles, to which I have not hitherto alluded. You will not understand me as in the least regarding the error as intentional on your part. Speaking of the rod of our heavenly Father, you cite as from me the following sentences. "Its object is to render us partakers of his holiness. *Till*

this end is accomplished, the rod will be used. *When* this end is accomplished, it will no more be used." I said, "it will no longer be needed," that is, to render Christians perfect in holiness. It may in the form of affliction, however, be needed still, as said above, to *confirm* the Christian in holiness, and to render him in higher and higher degrees "a partaker of the divine nature."

But the most important misquotation is the following. "On the supposition" that perfect holiness is not actually attained in this life, "how can the position be sustained that it is attainable?" I have never published such a sentence, nor expressed such a sentiment. The passage from which these parts of a sentence were quoted, will show the impropriety of imputing this sentiment to me.

"Now, what evidence can we have that such a state is unattainable, higher than this, that all Christians, in all past ages, have honestly and prayerfully aimed, and all will continue, to the end of time, thus to aim at this state, a fact which all admit, with the absolute certainty of not attaining to it? Should it be said that such efforts are not made with sufficient vigor, the answer is, that, to put forth efforts with the adequate vigor, is the very thing at which all are aiming. On the supposition above referred to, how can the position be sustained that the state under consideration is attainable?"

You represent me as arguing that complete sanctification is unattainable, on the simple supposition that it is never attained. Now I have never reasoned thus. I argue, that such a state is unattainable, not on the supposition that it is not attained, but that every Christian from the beginning to the end of the world honestly and prayerfully aims at it with the absolute certainty of failure. With what propriety can such a state be said to be attainable? What higher evidence can we have, that a state lies beyond the reach of human attainment, than the fact, that every individual of the race honestly endeavors to reach it, and fails to accomplish his object? This is what your doctrine affirms of all Christians in respect to complete sanctification in this life. With what propriety, then, can it be affirmed, if this doctrine be true, that complete sanctification is in this life attainable?

VIII. In this communication and elsewhere, I have affirmed that we do not argue from the mere revelation of the provisions and promises of divine grace for the complete sanctification of Christians in this life, that any will be thus sanctified. While we admit and affirm this, we also maintain that these provisions contemplated in connection with all the circumstances attending their revelation, afford the strongest presumptive evidence in favor of this fact. The gospel, with all its provisions, promises and influences, is revealed for two avowed and specific objects. 1. The salvation of sinners. 2. The complete sanctification of believers, not only in eternity, but also in this life.

Against each of these objects the powers of darkness have arrayed themselves. Suppose it should appear at the judgment, that notwithstanding the provisions and promises of grace, the gift of the word and Spirit of God,

and all the influences of the gospel for the salvation of men, the powers of darkness had succeeded in preventing the redemption of every solitary sinner on earth. What a signal triumph of darkness over light would that be! Now shall we suppose that when God has, in the presence of heaven and earth, yes, of the whole universe, made his provisions, hung out his promises, given his word and Spirit, organized his Church, and appointed his ministry and ordinances, for this avowed and specific object, the complete sanctification of believers in this life, it will be told at the judgment that the powers of darkness have succeeded in preventing, in the case of every believer, the accomplishment of this object? Would not this be a triumph of darkness over light, just as signal as in the former instance? Shall we suppose that such an event will occur? I freely say to you, that I no more believe, that in opposition to the avowed object of the plan of redemption, the powers of darkness will succeed in preventing the complete sanctification of every believer in this life, than they will succeed in preventing the salvation of every sinner. No, "*many shall be washed, and made white.*" Christ will show himself stronger than the strong man armed, by yet, in this world, "presenting his Church to himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it shall be holy and without blemish."

IX. Permit me to recur again to the "practical effect" of your doctrine. I will suppose that an individual in a state of intense "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," after entire conformity to the will of God, has read your two articles, and come to the full conviction that you are right. What have you done for him? You have extinguished in his mind all hope of attaining, during the present life, the state after which he is seeking, and for means of attaining which he came to you to inquire. The complete sanctification which he is seeking has, for the present life, ceased to be an object of hope, as perfectly as salvation has to lost sinners. Suppose a sinner comes to you to inquire what he shall do to be saved? You fully convince him that the day of grace with him is over; that the last star of hope has become extinct. Will that sinner under that impression earnestly seek salvation? We all know he will not. The belief of your system has brought the brother above referred to, the brother whose weak hands and feeble knees you are required to confirm and strengthen, into precisely the same relation to complete sanctification in this life. Will he be induced under such convictions to seek with earnestness this blessing? Will not the practical effect of the total extinction of hope be the same in both instances?

But this is not all. You have made this Christian sensible of the possession of powers which he is required to exert, but which he is convinced he will not exert, and of provisions and promises in the gospel for his complete sanctification of which he will not avail himself. Can the belief of such facts be regarded by him as "good tidings of great joy?" Can it exert a hallowed practical effect upon his mind?

X. I close this communication by noticing the manner in which you "try to account for it, that Mr. Mahan's doctrine exerts so mighty an influence

over his mind, and the minds of others, calling forth energies and imparting joys before unknown." Among the motives by which you suppose that *I* may be influenced, is the fact, that it came to my mind as a *new doctrine*, and that I was in this sense the *discoverer* of it. This certainly cannot be attributed to those who have received the doctrine through my instrumentality as the cause of its influence upon their minds. Suppose they be asked, then, why this view of the gospel in their minds "calls forth energies and imparts joys before unknown?" They will tell you, that it is because this view of the Gospel meets, and meets perfectly, all the changeless wants of their being, which the other view never did, and never can meet. This view of the Gospel brings to their faith a *present* Savior, a Savior in whom they are *now* "complete," and of whose "fulness they may *now* receive, and grace for grace," till "their joy is full." The other view presents the same Savior, to be sure; but puts his fulness "afar off," beyond the verge of life. This view of the Gospel brings all the promises necessary to our present holiness and joy, "*very nigh* to us, even into our mouths and into our hearts." The other permits us to behold the same promises, to be sure, but "afar off," within the veil of eternity. This would be their testimony, and in giving it, they would present the highest evidence that this view of the Gospel does, and the other does not, correspond with the "mind of the Spirit."

In regard to the supposition which you have made respecting the *motives* by which I may be influenced, I would only reply, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way," by avowing, even the suspicion, that he may be influenced by motives which the Searcher of hearts may not impute to him. Your pupil, with much esteem,

A. MAHAN.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

Although affliction smites my heart,
And earthly pleasures flee,
There is one bliss that ne'er shall part —
My joy, O God, in thee.

That joy is like the orb of day,
When clouds its track pursue;
The shades and darkness throng its way,
But sunlight struggles through.

O Thou, my everlasting light,
On whom my hopes rely,
With Thee the darkest path is bright,
And fears and sorrows die.

U.

THE FRUIT OF HOLINESS.

The following is an extract from a letter by a brother preparing for the work of the holy ministry. It will interest the lovers of our cause. O that all our ministers would seek for that baptism which inspires this brother with so much love to Christ and energy in his cause. He has enjoyed the blessings of perfect love for several months.

DEAR BROTHER KING, — I address a few lines to you upon the subject which we conversed upon in Boston.

In the first place, I will rehearse some of the dealings of the Lord with me. The day that I arrived here, a lonely, disconsolate feeling came over me. I had left my friends in B., the cause to which I had long been attached, and my employment, come to a strange place with but one acquaintance, an untried people, and an employment to which I thought I had been called of God, but not with that strong witness which removed all doubts that I was in the path of duty. I retired to make a fresh consecration of all my powers to the work of the Lord, when friends, all that was dear to me, and the trials of an itinerant ministry, were laid upon the altar. He who answereth by fire, came down and consumed the sacrifice. I was filled with the fulness of God. I had received the anointing of the Lord for the work before me. I felt prepared to go forward. I wanted to have a clear evidence that I was in the will of God, so that no future temptation should lead me to doubt. The manifestations of his love, the promises which I had received, especially this, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," made me bold before the Lord. I was led to ask for an evidence that I was in the path of duty, that ere the day past, God should use me as an instrument in the sanctification of a soul, and the conversion of one. Blessed be the good Lord he did, and to Jesus be all the praise. Brother M. introduced me to a mother in Israel. While in conversation with her and her daughter, the latter was enabled to believe for full salvation, and has lived it since. In the evening, at the meeting, one rose for prayers. At the close of the meeting I spoke with her, and found her despairing of obtaining mercy, but in a few minutes she took hold of Jesus as her atoning sacrifice: her mourning was turned to praise, and I was laid prostrate in the depths of humility at Jesus' feet. I felt my nothingness, and God's peculiar love to me in granting all my desire. From that day to this, I have not had a temptation to regret the steps which I have taken. God has condescended to use this worm in the sanctification of many, and the conversion

of some since then. Glory be to God, I was in company yesterday afternoon ; it was a camp meeting to my soul ; four individuals took hold of the blessing of holiness, two fully, the others almost afraid to believe that so simple an exercise of faith would bring the blessing, but I trust after a little more conversation with them, they will rejoice fully. Freedom from sin is the point we keep before them. My brother, boasting is excluded.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

WHAT IS OUR EXPECTATION.

When I first resolved to make an entire consecration of myself to God, I did it with an expectation never to recall the vow, either by words or action ; for I could not look at the path of holiness and say, it shall be *my* path, until I had looked over the ground and “counted the cost, to see if I could take this way *“the journey through”* to life’s very end. And so when I commenced seeking, I began with the decision never to yield my purpose. I commenced with the expectation of attaining and of *retaining*. But I had not proceeded far in the exercise of seeking, before I found that the enemy that fought against me sought to dispossess me of that expectation. Indeed, he sought to dispossess me of every help ; but to none did he seem to aim so frequently and so artfully as this. And many a sore conflict did I have by giving him a little encouragement that he would succeed in getting this from me ; so that I soon learned it was all important that I should hold fast in this respect. This I endeavored to do. Thanks be unto the blessed Trinity this endeavor was not in vain. By cultivating my feelings in this manner, I was enabled to overleap every obstacle ; so that, by the hand of faith, I was at length led by the blessed Spirit into the “narrow way.” Having entered the way, and having learned the importance of the expectation, — to keep it firm in view of what we desire, and bid it depart in view of what we fear, — I began my journey, determining to look well to this subject upon every occasion and in every emergency. And this attention has, thus far, had its reward. Surely I could not dispense with this attention and “hold fast whereunto I have attained ;” for in looking back upon the past, I see many occasions upon which I should have been likely, and more than likely, to fall from my “steadfastness,” had I not,

in view of them when before me, called up my mind to see what was my expectation. And no less valuable has this exercise been, when I have found myself already in the trying circumstances; for, from the habit of summoning my energies, (made efficient by the strengthening Spirit,) and crying out, *what is my expectation?* — when in *anticipation* of trials to my faith, it was easy to do it, even when the deep waters were already surrounding me. But I will particularize; for by so doing, I can make plainer what I wish to say. For example: I expect always to “witness for Christ;” that is, by word, when a time for speaking is given; and by action, *at all times*. I expect to speak to all to whom I can get any reasonable access, of our immortal nature, and of their hopes and prospects in view of “the day of Jesus Christ.” I expect to “bear all things;” to be always kind and gentle. I *do not* expect, at any time, or under any circumstances, to be provoked to sin, either in feeling or action. I expect, when in prospect of a social hour, to speak no idle, hurtful words. I expect, when returning to my home, after a long absence, that there, among all the little family associations, and child-like familiarities and joys, I shall honor a holy profession. In short, upon my first waking thought in the morning of each day, my language is, I expect to *please my Maker* in all things to day. Should I be asked why I speak so positively, how I can do it, I should answer,—It is my privilege to do as these expectations say. It is the most precious will of Him, whose hand is over me. I mean to do it; it is the will of God I should do it; therefore, I *expect* to do it. And again, why I speak with so much apparent certainty, is, I have learned that man usually does, and is, (morally, to say nothing further,) what he expects to do, and be.

Dear Christian reader, is not this your experience? When you go to the place where prayers are offered, and praises are spoken, with an expectation of joining your voice with others, do you not do it, though the cross be ever so heavy? And if you ever go and sit trembling until your opportunity for “witnessing” has passed, and you have wounded your own soul, did you go with a strong expectation of doing all your duty? If, when sitting in social converse, you speak some words to your own hurt and the hurt of others, did you commence that conversation with a clear expectation not to speak any vain, hurtful word? If you ever find yourself provoked to anger, irritability, or complaints, do you find, at the same time, that you had settled in your mind, a well defined expectation *never* to enter into any of these tempers, upon ever so great provocation? As we understand expectation in this connection, we may compare it to the pioneer, that clears

the way before us, so that we accomplish what we desire. It may be asked, if this is not the same principle or rule of living, as that of constant consecration, and unyielding faith. In relation to the principle of faith, it stands as a part to the whole. It is certainly susceptible of being resolved into other determinations and feelings, connected with the exercise of faith; but as a comprehensive expression, it seems to answer to the ideas of leading the soul to do and be what it purposes — what it asks. I will only add: I have clearly found (in the study of holy living especially) that a well sustained expectation is indispensable to success with

A STUDENT.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERIOR OR HIDDEN LIFE.

NO. X.

ON THE CONFESSION OF SIN.

Should those who have experienced the blessing of sanctification, and who, in the view of charity, may be regarded as truly holy persons, confess sin? This is a question which is sometimes asked with a degree of solicitude and from good motives. And besides, it is often adduced as one of the greatest objections to the doctrine of holiness, that those, who have experienced it, ought not to and cannot confess sin.

FIRST. The confession of sin during the whole course of the present life is exceedingly proper, for various reasons; and in the first place, because sin is an unspeakable evil. We suppose that those who have experienced the blessing of sanctification, will understand this remark more fully than others. They have tasted the bitter fruits of sin; they have in many cases endured a severe and terrible contest in driving it from the heart; they are now engaged momentarily in a constant warfare to prevent its re-entrance; they know it is the one great thing and the only thing which separates the soul from God; they know that every sin, even the smallest, is exceedingly heinous in God's sight; they feel that they had rather die a thousand deaths than voluntarily commit even the smallest sin. Now when they remember, that during a considerable portion of their lives they were sinning against God every day and hour; despising, injuring, and insulting continually that great and good Being, whom now their hearts as continually adore, they are penetrated with the deepest grief. They never, never can forget the greatness of their former degradation and guilt. And in their present state of mind they never can remember, without being at each distinct retrospection deeply humbled and penitent. Indeed, as true confession consists much

more in the state of the heart than in the expression of the lips, and as the surest mark of true confession is an earnest striving after the opposite of that which is confessed as wrong, those, who are earnestly seeking and practising holiness, may be said in the highest sense of the terms to be always acknowledging and always lamenting their sin. Their watching, their strife, their warfare is against sin, as the evil and bitter thing which their soul hates; and which their souls shall ever hate, whenever and wherever committed, whether by themselves or others, at the present time or in times past.

SECOND. There is a propriety and a practical importance in the confession of sin, during the whole course of the present life, because our infirmities, our defects of judgment, our sins of ignorance, from which no one in the present period of the history of the church can reasonably expect to be free, require an atonement, as well as our wilful or voluntary transgressions. It is unnecessary here to enter into an argument for the purpose of showing that such imperfections, originally flowing from our fallen condition and our connection with Adam, require the application of Christ's blood; because this is a view which, so far as we know, is universally conceded by the advocates of the doctrine of present holiness, and certainly not less so by their opposers. It is very plainly a Scripture doctrine, as may be seen among other places by consulting the following passages on sins of ignorance. Levit. ch. iv. v. Num. ch. xv. 27-30. We shall not attempt to explain in this place how it is, on philosophical principles, that God can be just in calling us to strict account for unavoidable imperfections and errors. This will be attempted to be done in another place. It is enough here, that the fact is taken for granted. It may be proper to remark, however, that practically Christians, who are interiorly and well established in the divine life, whenever they have fallen into such errors, experience no true peace of mind, until they find a sense of forgiveness. For an error in judgment, for an ill-placed word, when there was no evil intention, for the mere blindnesses and ignorances which darken our path whenever they result in ill, they find no resource but in an immediate and believing application to the atoning blood. It is true, they do not feel condemnation; or more properly, perhaps, they do not feel remorse, as they ever do when they have committed a deliberate transgression; but they feel deep humiliation and sorrow of heart; they see the results of sin flowing from the original rebellion; and have what may perhaps be called an *instinctive* conviction, that the occasion is a fitting one for penitent grief and for humble confession. Now as such infirmities are very frequent, and as indeed they are unavoidable so long as we come short of the intellectual and physical perfection of Adam, we shall have abundant occasion to confess our trespasses, and our sin, in this sense of the term, will ever be before us.

It may be proper to remark here, that it was probably in this view of the subject that Mr. Wesley, although he held to the doctrine of Christian perfection or of perfect love, did not hold to the doctrine of *sinless* perfection. That is to say, he maintained that it was both our duty and our privilege to

love God with all our heart; and at the same time, although being perfect in love, we should not be under condemnation, it would be our duty to confess all tresspasses of ignorance and imperfection, not less than deliberate sins. This is the true view; it was always maintained by Mr. Wesley; and is creditable to that remarkable sagacity which ever characterized him. It is very desirable, in its practical results, that this view should be maintained at the present time, because it will constantly prompt us not only to seek perfection in love, which is the most important thing, but to seek perfection in manners, habits, health, words, knowledge, and all good judgment.

THIRD. It is proper, furthermore, to confess our sins, because there may be sins in us which are seen by the omniscient eye of God, but which may not be obvious to ourselves. We have no doubt that, as a general thing, we may rely upon our consciousness in confirmation of the great fact of perfection in love. Certainly it is a reasonable idea, that as a general thing, a man may know in himself, or in his own consciousness, whether he loves God or not; and whether he loves him with his whole heart or not. At the same time there may occasionally be cases in which he is left in some degree of doubt. He may, through the influence of some sudden temptation, be driven so closely upon the line which separates rectitude from sin, that it is almost impossible for him to tell whether he has kept within it. The Scriptures also recognize the great deceitfulness of the human heart. Who, then, is able, either on philosophical or scripture principles, to assert, *absolutely and unconditionally*, that he has been free from sin, at least for any great length of time? We may, therefore, with great propriety, even if there were no other reason but this, ask the forgiveness of our tresspasses, of our sins, or of whatever God sees amiss in us. And it is unquestionably our duty so to do.

We may add here, that it is generally and perhaps we may say universally the case, that those who give good evidence of possessing the blessing of sanctification, speak of their state in a qualified rather than in an absolute manner. In other words, they generally express themselves (and it is exceedingly proper that they should do so) merely as if they hoped or had reason to hope that they had experienced this great blessing, and were kept free from sin. Such a mode of expression is unobjectionable; is consistent with confession, and corresponds to the precise state of the case.

FOURTH. It is proper and important also to acknowledge our having sinned against God and to humble ourselves before him on account of sin, because we are thus continually reminded of the unspeakable condescension and mercy of God as manifested in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is impossible that a truly holy mind, one that has deeply felt the living God within, should ever forget the depth of its former degradation, however different and however encouraging may be its present state. And whenever it calls to recollection its former pollution, it cannot be otherwise than deeply impressed with a sense of the Savior's wonderful goodness and love. May we not even conjecture that it will be our privilege through all eternity to

remember and to confess our former fallen state. Even in heaven, renewed and purified as we shall be, we shall in one sense at least be sinners saved by grace, and shall undoubtedly repeat with joy the song of the ransomed, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

With these considerations we leave the subject, after a single remark further. While it is proper for all to make confession during life, it is nevertheless true, that the mind of a person who is in a sanctified state is chiefly occupied with supplications and thanksgivings. Such persons may be said for the most part to be always praying, always supplicating, and in every thing giving thanks. Such is their peace of mind, such their delight in God's character, such their sense of inward purity, such their conformity to God's will, that their prevalent state must necessarily be one of divine communion and of holy rejoicing.

A. K.

SACRED MEDITATIONS.

I will meditate upon Thee in the night watches.

The darkness of night overshadows me, and puts out the sight of every object: but mine eye is turned to Thee, O my Father. I wake, and watch for the light of thy presence, for the joy of thy love. For the presence of my God, for fellowship with Jesus, for the communion of the Holy Ghost, my soul waiteth. Draw nigh, O Holy Trinity, and let me feel the breath of the Eternal breathed upon me. Speak to this helpless, needy one; this child of dust; and say, receive the Holy Ghost. Speak with that voice which said, "Let there be light," and there was light. In vain is the whisper — that thou art afar off. Thou art near. Thou, O God, seest me. Thine eye is turned towards me, as if I were alone in the vast universe of God, having no one else to look to but thee; and thou having no one else to care for but me. Thine ear is open to my request; and thy hand full of blessings is extended towards me. Mercy overshadows me; it reaches to my wants. O happy suppliant of my Father's bounty, I ask and I receive. I am not alone. The man, Christ Jesus, he is with me. I ask in his name. I present his claim, which thou wilt not deny; therefore am I heard and answered. Thou, O my Father, hast given me a name to plead, which will not only command thine ear, but reach thine heart, and draw down the richest boon a God can bestow — a humble, holy heart. Yes; I can prevail in Jesus's name, and not let my Father go without a blessing. I am not alone. Jesus, at the right hand of God, is

pleading with me. Faint and feeble may be the words I utter; but they are heard, and re-echoed by my powerful Intercessor. I will breathe my breath into his ear, and sink in slumber in the arms of his love.

Again, the morning dawns, the night passes, the shadows flee away. I awake, and still find myself with thee. The sunbeams of thy love penetrate my soul, and send light and gladness to its very centre. In his light, I see light; light compared with which the sun itself is darkness, losing all its splendor. It is the light of the Spirit, shining on the truth, God's truth, and pointing as with a sunbeam, to the way of holiness, cast up for the ransomed to walk in, which so cheers and gladdens my heart. I had long been a wanderer in the dark, dreary mazes of sin, uncheered by the hope of present salvation. But now the thick scales are fallen from my eyes, and I know that Jesus is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*; that there is present redemption through Him. Glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Now, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.

How may the soul approach God? She comes with hallowed affections, with ardent aspirations for entire conformity to God. God is every where. It needs but the holy heart to feel and to enjoy his presence. *God is every where.* It was a lesson of my childhood; but I found not God, until I found holiness; until I exercised faith in the blood of cleansing. Now I know it is only the pure in heart that see God. The purer the heart, the nearer its approach to God. My soul cries out unceasingly for purity; for greater and greater degrees of purity; so shall I come nigher and nigher to God. From *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit, do thou cleanse me, O my Father. My heart, is it not thine? O do thou take possession of my mind also; of all its powers and faculties, and sanctify them wholly to thyself. Take my memory, my imagination, my reasoning powers, and reign supreme over all. Bring thou *every thought* into captivity; into subjection to thyself. Enlarge my capacities, so that I may more and more understand, and be enabled to perform all thy will concerning me. Thou art the Author of mind, the mind of minds; immense is thy eternal mind. O receive my mind, depressed and darkened in its fallen state; O receive it, and restore it to thyself a pure mind, and let it evermore expand itself in thee. Hear this prayer of thy feeble child, O my Father; who knows enough of thee to love thee, and who desires to approach still nearer to so good a Father.

P. L. U.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

Omitting some introductory remarks, which we cannot conveniently insert, the writer of this communication proceeds as follows :

Ten days after I first began to examine the doctrine of holiness, in the evening, as I retired alone to my room, I felt a desire to continue in calling upon the Lord until I obtained cleansing. I felt a greater degree of encouragement than usual. The promise, "He that cometh will come and will not tarry," was presented to my mind several times with unusual force. I felt to say, "Lord, I cannot let thee go except thou bless me."

I endeavoured with all the earnestness I was able to exert, believing to lay hold on the promises, especially those contained in that part of the new covenant where it is said, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you:" at the same time praying that I might approach the Mediator in faith for an answer to his own prayer, which he offered in behalf of his people; and also striving to yield myself up to his sweet control, believing that every necessity of my nature, every demand of my being, was met in Him. Suddenly, before I had labored long in this manner, the thought came to my mind, Why not yield now; and instantly I felt such a sinking into the arms of the Savior, such a falling down before God, as I never before experienced. I felt to be deserving of hell, yet my heart was filled with that "perfect love" which "casteth out all fear." I thought I should feel no fear if admitted into the immediate presence of my Judge. The thought of being one day thus admitted, was glorious beyond expression. The presence of the triune God seemed a reality, and my heart was deeply affected with an adoring awe and reverence. And yet I have no language to describe the love which seemed increasingly to fill my heart. I can only say it was filled to overflowing. There was a rapture in the name *Jesus*!

After some time I thought of the change wrought in me, and whether I believed that every demand of my being was met in God. I thought of some things which had heretofore occasioned me anxiety. But immediately there was a promise of Scripture applied which seemed exactly suited to my case, and I felt not the least anxiety. I could cast my "burden upon the Lord," and truly "he sustained" me.

While engaged in prayer for others, I was filled with an ecstasy of joy, and thus remained until weary nature found repose in sleep.

The next morning was a new day to me. As I walked abroad I could see God in every thing, and felt that every demand of my nature was met in God. In every plant, leaf, and flower, and in all the works of creation, particularly in the human countenance, I saw marks of creative power and wisdom of the divine Author far more clearly than ever before. During three weeks following, the state of my mind was much the same. Such a confiding trust and confidence in God I never felt before. My heart was filled with love, and I was kept constantly in perfect peace. Sin appeared truly to be that detestable thing which God's "soul hateth," and I desired greater evidence that my heart was "cleansed from sin." I could pray for nothing less than to be cleansed and kept continually from *all* sin. But I found it difficult to distinguish between sin and temptation. I felt that I needed the abiding witness of the Spirit.

After being favored with the privilege of conversing upon the subject with some Christian friends who enjoyed the blessing of sanctification, my views became less obscure. I was reminded of some passages of scripture which afforded me consolation. Light was thrown upon the subject, and a blessing was let down into my soul more and more. The Holy Spirit seemed increasingly to witness with my spirit that the work wrought in me was of a purifying nature. The joy I experienced at times was so great, it almost seemed, if it should be long continued to so great a degree, that the spirit would burst its tabernacle of clay. And when visited with acute bodily pain, I felt that I could not say I was afflicted; for it seemed sweet to suffer, because it was the divine will that I should; and though unknown to me how long it would be continued, yet it seemed as if it would be sweet to suffer so long as our compassionate Father saw best.

It is now twelve weeks since I was met with a blessing. During this time spiritual things have constantly appeared realities. I trust I have experienced that "peace which passeth understanding," and felt love to God, and no feelings other than those of love, and deep compassion, for any of the human family.

Although I have not recently felt so much of those rapturous joys which I at first experienced, yet on the whole my joy has increased. I have constantly more of a realizing sense of the divine presence. I enjoy a deeper peace within, and feel my heart more drawn out in prayer to God.

The love of Christ as manifested towards one all unworthy as I am, is wonderful! Truly his love is *infinite*. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

The Lord has not only manifested himself to me in days which are past, but I can say in the language of another, "I *now* feel his presence; my heart is stayed on the Lord; Jesus is precious; and I feel an increased determination to give up all for Christ, for he is worthy — he has blessed my soul beyond my highest expectations." To him be glory everlasting.

What I enjoyed in former years seems now but very little compared with what I have of late experienced. The last change in my feelings seems greater than the one when I first indulged the hope my sins were pardoned. This mercy has undoubtedly been bestowed in answer to believing prayer.

Notwithstanding I do not doubt but the Lord has blessed my soul, I feel that there is no safety even for a moment but in looking to him, who alone "is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

M.

TRUST IN GOD.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah xxvi. 3.

The very centre of the Christian religion is union with Christ, and the receiving him as our all; in other words called faith, or a "staying our minds upon him." To the doing this, there are many hindrances, but the two greatest and most general ones are —

First, the want of self knowledge; this keeps ninety-nine out of one hundred from Christ. They know not, or rather feel not that they are blind, naked, leprous, helpless, and condemned; that all their works can make no atonement, and that nothing they can do will fit them for heaven. When this is truly known, the first grand hindrance to our union with Christ is removed.

The second is the want of understanding "the Gospel of Christ;" the want of seeing therein the firm foundation given us for this pure and simple faith, the only solid ground of staying our souls on God. We must remember that the Gospel is "good news," and not be slow of heart to believe it. Christ receiveth sinners; he undertaketh their whole concern; he giveth not only repentance, but remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

He creates them anew: his love first makes the bride and then he delights in her. The want of viewing Christ in this light, as the author and finisher of our salvation, hinders the poor, humble penitent from casting himself wholly on the Lord, although he hath said, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

I do not mention sin, for sin is the very thing which renders man the object of Christ's pity: our sins will never turn away the heart of Christ from us, for they brought him down from heaven to die in our place; and the reason why iniquity separates between God and our souls, is because it turns our eyes from him, and shuts up in us the capacity of receiving those beams of love which are ever descending upon and offering themselves to us. But sin, sincerely lamented, and brought by "a constant act of faith" and prayer before the Lord, shall soon be consumed, as the thorns laid close to a fire; only let us abide thus waiting, and the Lord will pass through them and burn them up together.

When the soul feels its own helplessness, and receives the glad tidings of the Gospel, it ventures upon Christ; and though the world, the flesh, and the devil pursue, so that the soul seems often to be on the brink of ruin, it has still only to listen to the Gospel, and venture on Christ, as a drowning man on a single plank, with "I can but perish;" remembering these words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

The consequence of thus trusting is, that God keeps the soul from its threefold enemy: defends it in temptation, in persecution, in heaviness. Through all it finds power to repose itself on Christ, to say "God shall choose my inheritance for me." Here the Christian finds peace with God, peace with himself, and peace with all around him; the peace of pardon, the peace of holiness; for both are obtained through staying the mind on Christ. He walks in the perpetual recollection of a present God, and is not disturbed by any thing. If he feels sin, he carries it to the Savior; and if in heaviness, through manifold temptations, he still holds fast his confidence: he is above the region of clouds.

The careless sinner is not to be exhorted to trust in Christ; it would be to cast pearls before swine. Before an act of faith, there must be an act of self despair; before filling, there must be emptiness. Is this thy character? Then suffer me to take away thy false props. Upon what dost thou stay thy soul? Thy honesty, morality, humility, doing good, using the means, business, friends, confused thoughts of God's mercy? This will never do. Thou must be brought to say, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Without trembling at God's word, thou canst not receive Christ. Nothing short of love will do.

The penitent needs, and, blessed be God, has every encouragement. You have nothing but sin; — it is time you should understand the Gospel. You see yourself sinking, — Christ is with you.

You despair of yourself, — hope in Christ. You are overcome, — Christ conquers. Self condemned, — he absolves. Why do you not believe? Is not the messenger, the word, the Spirit of God sufficient? You want a joy unspeakable, — the way to it is by thus waiting patiently upon God. Look to Jesus. He speaks peace; abide looking, and your peace shall flow as a river.

J. FLETCHER.

ROMANS VII. 25.

It may have seemed difficult for many of our readers to understand, in this relation of experience, why St. Paul should declare the flesh under the "law of sin," immediately after he had thanked God for deliverance "through Jesus Christ our Lord." There are other ways in which this may be explained, but we are much pleased with the opinion of Dr. Macknight. We give below his translation, commentary and illustration.

TRANSLATION.

I thank God,¹ (ρυσαντι με, from ver. 24.) WHO DELIVERS ME through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Απα εγ) *Do I myself, then, as a slave, serve with the mind the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin?*² BY NO MEANS.

COMMENTARY.

Our deliverance from these evils does not come from the law but from the gospel: therefore *I thank God who delivers us through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Being thus delivered, *Do I, myself, then, or any delivered person, as slaves, still serve with the mind the law of God, by ineffectual approbations of good and disapprobations of evil, but with the body the law of sin, (ver. 23,) performing wicked actions habitually? No; as becomes delivered persons, we serve God both with the mind and with the body.*

ILLUSTRATION.

1. I thank God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord.] — The Clermont, and some other copies, with the Vulgate, read here χαρις του Θεου, "the grace of God." But the common

reading, being supported by almost all the ancient MSS. and by the Syriac version, is to be preferred; especially as it contains an ellipsis, which, if supplied according to the apostle's manner from the foregoing sentence, will give even a better sense than the Clermont reading. — thus, "Who will deliver me?" &c. "I thank God," who delivers me "through Jesus Christ." See ch. viii. 2, note 2.

2. Do I myself, then, as a slave, serve with the mind the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin? — *Απα ουν αυτος εγω*, &c. Here *απα* is a particle of interrogation. See Ess. iv. 88. This question is an inference from what the apostle had said concerning his being delivered from the body of death through Jesus Christ. Being delivered, "Do I myself, then, as a slave, serve with?" &c. Translated in this manner, interrogatively, the passage contains a strong denial that the person spoken of, after being delivered from the body of this death, any longer serves, as formerly with the mind, only, the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin in his members; whereas, translated as in our English Bible, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin," it represents the delivered person as still continuing in that very slavery to sin, from which he says he was delivered by God through Christ, and utterly overturns the inference drawn, chap. viii. 1, from what is said in this passage: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit." 2. "For the law of the spirit," &c. But if those to whom there is no condemnation, "walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit," it surely cannot be said of such in any sense, that "with the flesh they serve the law of sin;" so that the common translation of ver. 25 is utterly wrong, and even dangerous.

It was our intention to commence the article of President Mahan, which cannot easily be praised too much, but to object to the doctrine of natural ability; but for want of room we have placed our remarks on the second page of the cover.